# Diagnosing Effect of English Novels on Augmenting EFL Learners' Language Skills and Competencies

*by* Toni Indrayadi

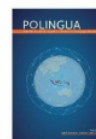**POLINGUA**

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# Diagnosing Effect of English Novels on Augmenting EFL Learners' Language Skills and Competencies

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*Abstract*— English novels add new dimensions to augmenting the second language or foreign language learners' skills and competencies. However, English novels have little roles in the Indonesian ELT context and gradually fade away from Indonesian EFL learning's programs today. This study, therefore, aimed at diagnosing the effects of English novels on augmenting EFL learners' language skills and competencies. This research entailed a qualitative research approach. The English Department (ED) students numbering 20 were the research participants. The interviews, focus groups, and participant observation were the key techniques of collecting data. The 1994 Miles and Huberman model of data display, data reduction, and conclusion were stages of analyzing the data. The findings show that reading English novels extensively and intensively develop the ED students' language skills of higher thinking skills, vocabulary acquisition, and productive-receptive skills of English and linguistic and pragmatic competencies. In conclusion, English novels discover a love of the language, practically improve and develop the 2nd-year ED students' exposure to English language and lead them to communicate like native English speakers.

*Keywords*— English novels; EFL learners; language skills; competencies

## I. INTRODUCTION

In varieties of English meetings such as international, national and local conferences, seminars, workshops, Forum Group Discussion (FGD), etc, the authors along with the other EFL teachers and lecturers are in high spirits of thrashing out about what were the most appropriate and affordable English learning resources for the EFL learners to enable them to augment their English language skills and competencies. One of some other attention-grabbing points of interest that bore positive result in that discussions was the EFL teachers' strength of mind to "*revive*, *re-reinforce* and *re-promote*" the use of novels in the EFL learning's programs. The courage of the EFL teachers' convictions to breathe novels into the EFL learning's programs egged the authors on investigating and studying the impacts and benefits of using novels on the EFL learners' English language skills and competencies. Ahead of doing library and online studies, the authors did a preliminary study to endorse the investigation.

The authors then casually debriefed and discussed with the EFL learners which were held throughout the years of 2020 for more than 25 days. There were five important questions relating to the title above. The first question proposed was about the EFL learners' self-love (like) reading novels. The second was the English learning resources they have ever had or used to augment their English language skills and competencies. The third was the focus of attention being paid when reading novels. The fourth was the novels' positive impacts on enhancing their English language skills and competencies after finishing reading them. The authors then beseeched them to list the impacts of reading novels on their language skills and competencies' enhancement. The last was the ways (how) they recalled the plots or storylines of novels.

The results of this preliminary study showed that, *firstly*, the EFL learners expressed their strong passion for reading novels. They were even willing to spend much of their time reading novels every day. For them, reading novels is like performing the five daily prayers. It is obligatory and mandatory although novels were hardly used when attending lectures. Then, they articulated their likes reading them

although it was just a pleasure or passing a craze or fad for a short period of time as they quickly got bored to read. They also conveyed their abhorrence, as the stories are much more about authors' imagination (mind's eye) to narrate things; things put across were dreamlike or were tricks to gratify, gladden, and or hypnotize the readers. Whilst snorting with laughter loudly and shaking head from side to side, they further uttered, "oftentimes, the Novels' authors tend to exaggerate and or understate anything in that stories." *Secondly*, during studying English, the primary learning resources of English were mostly from their lecturers' books they photocopied for lectures' requisites and self-interests. It was true indeed, they have ever read Novels when taking or attending the Drama, and other literary courses and no more after that.

*Thirdly*, when reading novels, and as suggested by their English literature's lecturers, they usually paid attention to the setting (time and location), characters, plot, a point of view (an angle or a perspective from which the story is narrated), and theme (a controlling idea or central insight). *Fourthly*, the EFL learners explicated that Novels can, in point of the facts, be used to facilitate the EFL learners to understand the structure of English (grammar); enrich vocabulary's acquisition and mastery, increase reading habit and interest; and have a strong desire to narrate and rewrite the storyline; stimulate critical thinking in understanding the stories and messages conveyed by the authors and facilitate them to be aware of other people's culture. A series of these brief explanations showed loads of benefits of reading Novels. Those who intensively and extensively read Novels will support them to boost up their language skills and competencies. Therefore, they can be turned out to be as appropriate learning resources of English.

*Fifthly*, retelling and writing (summarize or paraphrase) were the EFL learners' simplest ways of recalling and understanding the plots or storyline of Novels. In conclusion, the EFL learners' real experiences of expansively reading novels have effects on their English skills and competencies. The key to their success of learning English is to intensively and extensively read Novels. Hence, the real experiences of EFL learners reinforce the courage of EFL teachers' strength of mind to breathe the Novels into EFL classroom.

The EFL learners' real experiences attested that novels are one of some appropriate resources of learning and mastering English skills and competencies. Besides, Novels lead them to be more aware of one's culture. Therefore, Novels can be used as references in the EFL classroom. Wheeler (2001) explicate that Novels are part of a human being which naturally describe the people's life, culture, language, traditions, habits, political conditions, disputes, clashes, etc. What is more, Wheeler (2001) further put in plain words that high-quality of Novels can attract the EFL learners' attention to read; stimulate their learning motivation and engagement; promote and sharpen their higher thinking skills and enhance their language skills and competencies.

Another critical benefit of using well-selected Novels, as stated by Laine (1997), is to alter the EFL learners' paradigm toward learning English (form starting to *dread* to attend to English classes; dread to think of what will happen when learning English; words, short talks, dialogues; never use it in everyday real- learning English is mandatory; so

embarrassed trying to speak English in class, feel ashamed of practicing; Grammar, worksheets, drills are too much, awfully and boring!; memorize life; attend/take test; etc to running, skipping and jumping over the English class)**.** The brief explanation leads the authors to formulate the purpose of conducting library and online studies were to theoretically discuss and explicate the qualitative effects of using Novels on augmenting the EFL learners' language skills and competencies.

Relating back to the objective of the research, the single space of research question proposed is "what the qualitative effects of using novels on augmenting the EFL learners' language skills and competencies."

This research has impacts on the learners' language competence and skills of English. The language competence of English which better enhance the EFL learners' know-how is Grammatical/Linguistic Competence, stressing on command of the language code, including such things as knowledge of "lexical items," the rules of word and sentence formations (morphology & grammar, syntax), meanings of words (semantics), spellings (orthography→ systems of writing a language such as letter, words, syllable, spelling, hyphenation, capitalization, word breaks, and punctuation. The language skills of English which strongly have effects on are reading, speaking, and writing skills. This research ignites the learners' motivation to read a lot as the stories are interesting and stir the learners' curiosity. Ahead of sharing and communicating the novelist, the learners are demanded to note a summary or synopsis of the novels. The written records are exceedingly important to help them communicate and explicate the novelist's ideas of, for examples, the setting, plot, characters, the background of writing the story, etc.

**Literature Review**

*Literature Work in English Language Teaching (ELT)*

English novel has long been recognized and utilized as a well-chosen reference to the EFL learning's program around the globe, i.e. Hongkong, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, etc. Young (2009) as excerpted in Willis (1996); Wajnryb (2003) affirms that "Novels guide the EFL learners to have better experience to (practice) the (accessible) language, have chances to communicate the language, have direct engagement in acquiring language, and are encouraged to familiarize themselves with reading English texts." In some EFL classrooms for instance, on the contrary, Novels have not been sensibly considered as an important learning reference to exclusively augmenting the EFL learners' language skills and competencies. There were some reasons why Novels have not been used yet as a major reference to improving the EFL learners' language skills and competencies. The *first reason* is that Novels are more arduous to procure than other general English books; it then takes a lot of time to order as well as needs a lot of bucks to purchase some well-selected Novels overseas (although Novels can be easily accessed online and free of charge). *Secondly*, for EFL learners themselves, it seizes a lot of exclusive time to read one English Short Story and this becomes ineffective as it vainly wastes time.

*Thirdly*, there are very few small groups of EFL learners who are willing or have strong passion for reading

novels, i.e. Novels. *Fourth*, when assigning them to read, they tend to translate the text from SL to TL rather than reading and understanding the elements of the story (setting, characters, plot, a point of view, and theme) and meaning conveyed by authors. As a result, every L2/FL learner takes day after day to approximately understand series of a story. Some of the causes are they are not used to or accustomed to reading English novels like Novels; do not have strategies to effectively read the texts; a habit of translating the texts, are discouraged to keep reading when they oftentimes find or encounter unknown words and phrases; the storylines are complicated, twisted, and meandering rather than going in a straight line or straight to the point and therefore they often lose the plot, etc. *Fifthly*, as a part of the English novels, some articulate that Novels are exceptionally apt to be used to exclusively enhance English literature learners' skills rather than improve EFL learners' language skills (grammatical and pragmatic competencies). *Sixthly*, it is awfully multifaceted to evaluate the EFL learners' learning outcomes (language skills and competencies) using a mere single reference like Novels.

Similarly, Siyabi (2017) elucidated that the term of "language through literature" was a renowned catchphrase popularized by Butler (2002) to describe the use of literature or novels as one of the appropriate learning resources in EFL classroom although these references were not expected as most of the EFL teachers were, though it is not wrong, keen on strengthening learners' grammatical competence. They believe that English Language Teaching has no affinity to novels, such as Novels or poetry. The ELT scholar, Topping (1968), extremely opposed the existence of literature in EFL classrooms. He argued, "Novels have no legitimate place in a foreign/second language teaching and learning program." This well-built antithesis engenders the EFL teachers' paradigm shift (caprice) from having a strong belief to belittling the effects of reading Novels on EFL learners' language skills and competencies. In conclusion, these six reasons above can, to the best of authors' understanding, automatically reduce the values of English literatures in EFL classrooms. As a result, Novels are still set aside or isolated in most EFL classrooms.

To the best of the authors' assumption that the six reasons above are still exceptionally bound or influenced by some classical methods of teaching foreign languages. The influence and attachment are acceptable indeed but are considered insufficient for enhancing, and enriching EFL learners' language skills and competencies. The use of the Grammar Translation Method of translating novels from the source to the target language is best used to teaching grammar and translation. Similarly, the other ELT methods such as Direct Method and the Audio-lingual Method are probably best made use of teaching language structures/grammar and vocabulary mastery. Although these six communicative ELT methods such as Community Language Learning, Suggestopedia, Silent Way, Total Physical Response, Natural/communicative Approach, and Notional-Functional Syllabus keep promoting communicative dimensions of language (focus on productive language skills → oral and written forms of communication), the literary works have not been considered as pivotal references to teaching and learning second/foreign languages. However, they are still, at least, extremely apt to be used to improve EFL learners' four principle-language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In these latest six methods, oral communicative competence became the focus on learning foreign language (Richards, J. and Rodgers, T., 1986; Erkaya, 2005, Renau, 2016).

By contrast, Siyabi (2017) as cited in Butler (2002; Goldberg (2006); Waters (2009) put in plain words that "even though the integration of Novels into EFL learning's program has been stormily debated and have not been explicitly pointed out as one of the EFL learning's references to the classical and latest methods of teaching foreign languages, many research studies have validated that the use of Novels as authentic materials is exceptionally potential for enhancing learners' language skills and competencies. An awareness of these advantages can encourage language researchers, practitioners, and teachers to look for the best ways of integrating novels into the EFL learning's program. The EFL learners' awareness of these benefits can also make the practice more successful.

*Underlying Principles of Using Novels in the EFL Learning Program*
*(EFL Classroom)*

The pro and cons of using novels as references in the EFL learning's programs do not significantly affect the English teachers' decision to use them. Despite the longstanding controversy and criticism, researchers and EFL teachers precisely bring forth that Novels are accesses to arousing learners' learning motivation. In addition, Young (2009) as she referred to Wajnryb (2003) pointed out that in the process of language learning, "what is essential is that the learners have exposure to accessible language, has opportunity to use language, and has the motivation to learn." In details, Young (2009) and other ELT scholars, practitioners and EFL teachers elucidated their conceptions or underlying principles of using Novels in the EFL classrooms. The *first* conceptions or underlying principle was the "Novels are appropriate learning resources or references to comprehensible input to the EFL learners (Wajnryb, 2003)." The comprehensible input means here is 'something that the EFL learners can understand and achieve' when, for examples, an EFL teacher reading aloud the story, the EFL learners reading silently, or taking notes what they listening to (Young, 2009 in Wajnryb, 2003). What is more, the other comprehensible inputs are to facilitate them to directly experience and acquire a wide assortment of natural language rich in vocabulary and grammatical complexity (McQuillan & Tse, 1998)."

The *second* is Novels were access to enhancing the EFL learners' linguistic competence. As she extracted from other ELT scholars and EFL teachers such as Wright (1997); Garvie (1990); Cameron, (2001); Godwin & Perkins (1998) and Laine (1997), Young (2009) put in plain words that "using stories can expose the EFL learners to diverse language patterns, for example, the inspired use of language to articulate imagery, and new-fangled vocabulary can be learned in a natural context. All these can facilitate the EFL learners' language development."

The *third* is to adjust the EFL learners' attitude towards learning English. Laine (1997) enlightened that "those who are discouraged to learn foreign language, or have low achievers of that language, Novels, if they are circumspectly

selected, can revolutionize their outlook, mind-set, and thoughts towards English as they will reflect that learning language is exciting and not intricate as they previously think." Wajnryb (2003) made clear that "the story itself - its content, is interesting that can motivate the EFL learners and make them involve in the class." Further, the stories introduce cultural traditions and values of the society they live (Young, 2009; Godwin & Perkins, 1998). The *fourth* is to increase the EFL learners' reading interest. Using true Novels in EFL classrooms will egg the EFL learners on reading more even outside the classroom.

Novels are mostly good for extensive reading, and such a practice endow learners with the chance to presume meaning in reading (Khatib, Rezaei, & Derakhshan, 2011). Generally, Novels follow a simple structure, and have the sequence of events which makes it even easier to understand the presented texts (Siyabi, 2017). Research studies have also proven that reading affected the EFL learners' academic performance because reading enhances all the other language skills (Siyabi, 2017; Al-Mahrooqi, 2012). More importantly, reading Novels familiarizes them with the collocations of the targeted words and their spelling (Siyabi, 2017).

*Fifthly*, as she referred to the ELT scholars' ideas of using Novels in EFL classrooms, Siyabi (2017) clarified that "Novels are a part of authentic materials enabling learners to experience how words are used in real contexts, which allows them "to gain an understanding of how lexis functions in real-world environments." Thus, learners gain a valuable opportunity to see the new words used in a real context and to revisit the words they already know." Reading literature exposes learners to "the formation and function of sentences, the diversity of possible structures, and the different ways of linking ideas (Siyabi, 2017). Lastly, it arouses learners' interaction with the literary text provides good opportunities to enhance their communication skills, which encourages them to talk and express their opinions (Siyabi, 2017). On these bases, these library and online studies attempted to discuss and elaborate the other important multiplicative effects of using Novels on enhancing EFL learners' language skills and competencies.

## II. METHOD

### Research Design

This research entailed qualitative research approach. The purposes of employing this approach was to facilitate the researchers to not numerically diagnose the qualitative effects of English novels on augmenting EFL learners' language skills and competencies (Shuttleworth, 2008; Alasuutari, 2010) so that it could help learners develop English language skills where this has so far not been seriously much discussed at the scientific altar or forum. This research was, therefore, expected able to disclose the effects of exploiting the literature work –English Novels- on the 2nd-year of Universitas Dharma Andalas English Department learners.

### Sample

The 2nd-year of Universitas Dharma Andalas English Department learners was samples or research participants. 20 was the number of the sample size of this research. Universitas Dharma Andalas English Department was the locus of the research. This research, at most, lasts for 1 year and was carried out 2 times a week. Each meeting lasted for 2 hours. So, there were 4 hours regularly spent in a week (Henry, 1990).

### Research Instrument

The researchers were the key instruments employed in this research whereas the tools used to collect the date were observation and journal-note-taking. This was the account which the researchers wrote of research's daily activities (Prior, 2003).

### Techniques of Collecting the Data

The interviews, focus groups, and participant observation were the key techniques of collecting data. Interview was used to explore the learners' learning experiences, views, opinions, and or beliefs on specific matters towards the English novels. Focus groups was exercised to diagnose how the knowledge (competence and skills of English) and concepts change, advance and work in a given group. Participant observation was to help the researchers to recognize phenomena by examining the learners' accounts (detailed/written records) and actions in an everyday English teaching and learning context and processes (Kitzinger, 1995; Gubrium, et al. (2012; Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011).

### Techniques of Analysing the Data

Table 1. 1994 Miles and Huberman model of Data Analysis
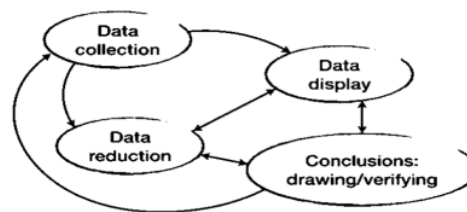


The image explicated that the analysis of displaying the data on the site emphasize that the columns in a matrix of time are arranged by time period, in order of stages, so that it can be seen when certain symptoms occurred. The basic principle was chronology. Following the stages in the analysis of ordered data, First, building a presentation, at this stage an easy way to move forward was to break up innovation into specific components or aspects, using this as a matrix line. The matrix column was periods of time, from initial use to later use. If changes occur in a component during that time period, we could enter a brief description of the changes (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Second, displaying data. At this stage, the analyzer was looking for changes in the innovation, component by component. These changes could be placed in field notes of interviews with coded innovation users, who were asked specifically whether they have made an encoded in the innovation book format. Continuation of the investigation according to the parts that have been added, dropped, repaired, combined, or selected for use. In some cases, it could refer to documentary evidence (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Third, analyze data. At this stage, the authors could understand more deeply about what was happening by referring to other aspects of the field notes, specifically what else people were saying about the change or its reasons (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Data analysis in qualitative research was carried out since before entering the field, during entering the field, and after completion of the field. Data analysis was performed when the data collection took place, and after the data collection was completed within a certain period.

Data analysis in this study used data analysis techniques in a site developed by Miles Huberman. Data that has been collected was made in a matrix. In the matrix, descriptive fragments of data was presented around certain events or experiences that divided the data before and after it. After the data was entered into the next matrix a checklist is made (Miles Huberman, 1994). Data analysis in qualitative research was carried out since before entering the field, during entering the field, and after completion of the field. Nasution in Sugiyono (2008), stated that the data analysis had begun since formulating and explaining the problem, before going into the field, and continued until writing the results of the research.

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

*Analytical Results of Library and Online Studies*

English novels are considered as effective learning resources of English inasmuch as the stories can draw the L2/FL learners' attention to interact with the real language used in real life as well as encourage them to share any information about the stories to others. Simply, this is the way the L2/FL learners communicate the language. The effectiveness of the use of English novels will automatically shift the L2/FL learners' belief and viewpoint towards learning English. They feel confident enough to behave in a particular way of doing by learning; of practicing the language; of doing drilling and exercises; of sharing/expressing/articulating ideas; of developing language skills and competencies, etc. Similarly, referring to the results of the library and online studies showed that the use of English novels multiplicatively affects the L2/FL learners' language skills and competencies. What are the effects? The *first* multiplicative effect of English novels is to develop the L2/FL learners' *Higher Thinking Skills* (HOTSs). Taken as a whole, HOTSs are one's abilities to deal with the state of affairs (condition, situation, and or circumstances) that s/he has never come across or bumped into beforehand. In conjunction with teaching or learning English as a foreign/second language, HOTSs can successfully happen, grow and develop during/when reading English novels through beseeching or guiding the L2/FL learners to extend to or focus on identifying the elements of the fictions such as plot, setting, characters, point of view, imagery, symbolism, and theme of the stories (The Learning Centre (TLC), n.d) (see the table below for details of how to lead/guide the L2/FL learners to develop their HOTs). The processes of identifying these elements unconsciously facilitate the L2/FL learners to develop their six levels of HOTSs, from remembering, understanding or comprehending, analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating, to creating (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).

In terms of identifying the plot, the common questions which may lead/guide the L2/FL learners to develop their HOTs are, or examples,
- What is the story about?
- What are the main events in the story?
- What are the conflicts in the plot?
- How are conflicts resolved?
- Is the main conflict between good and evil sharply differentiated, or is it is more subtle and complex?
- What is the climax of the story?
- At what point in the story does the climax occur?
- Is the ending of the story happy, unhappy, or indeterminate?
- What is the setting of the story?
- Where and when does the action take place?
- How does the setting affect characters in the story?
- Does their environment give them freedom, satisfaction, or enjoyment, or does their environment make them feel trapped, dissatisfied, or unhappy? Why?

In understanding the setting (particular place or type of surroundings where something is or takes place), the authors proposed such questions as follows.
- Describe the social forces and institutions that shape the characters and their lives: political, social, economic, philosophic, religious, educational, etc.
- Determine to what extent, if at all, the characters are influenced by nature.
- Who is/are the main character(s) in the story?
- What does the main character look like?
- Describe the main character's situation.
- Where does he/she live? Does he/she live alone or with others?
- What does the main character do for a living, or is he/she dependent on others for support?
- What are some of the chief characteristics (personality traits) of the character?
- How are these characteristics revealed in the story?
- How does the main character interact with other characters? Note the degree of complexity of his/her behavior, thought, and feelings; their appearances, their habits, mannerisms, speech, attitudes and values.
- What is the main character's attitude towards his/her life? Is he/she happy or sad, content or discontented? Why?

In identifying the characters (person or place consists of all the qualities they have that make them distinct from other people or places), the authors set the questions as follow.
- What sort of conflict is the character facing?
- How is this conflict revealed? Is it resolved? If so, how?
- What means does the author use to reveal character? Are the characters sufficiently dramatized? What use is made of character contrast?
- Are the characters consistent in their actions? Adequately motivated? Plausible? Does the author successfully avoid stock characters?

- Is each character fully enough developed to justify his role in the story? Are the main characters round or flat?
- Is any character a developing character? If so, is his change a large or a small one? Is it a plausible change for him? Is he sufficiently motivated? Is the change given sufficient time?
- At the end of the story, is the main character different from how he/she was at the beginning of the story? In what way has the character changed? What has caused this change?

Subsequently, in elaborating the novelists' points of views, the authors formulated the following questions.

- What point of view does the story use? Is the story told from a first-person perspective, in which the narrator is one of the characters in the story, and refers to himself or herself as "I"? Or is the story told from a third-person perspective, in which the narrator is not one of the characters in the story or may not participate in the events of the story?
- Is it consistent in its use of this point of view? If shifts are made, are they justified?
- What are the advantages of the chosen point of view? Does it furnish any clues as to the purpose of the story?
- Is the narrator reliable or unreliable? Does he/she have a limited knowledge or understanding of characters and events in the story?
- Does the narrator know almost everything about one character or every character, including inner thoughts?
- Look for a first person narrator, an omniscient narrator (one who knows all and tells all), a "central observer," who seems to be looking over a main character's shoulder and seeing more than the character possibly can.
- Decide whether the narrator assists the story or needlessly confuses it.
- Does the author use point of view primarily to reveal or conceal? Does he ever unfairly withhold important information known to the focal

Briefly, the first level of HOTS, *remembering* or *recognizing*, requires the L2/FL learners to get back and reprocess the relevant information about the story (plot, characters, setting, point of view, theme, etc). The second level of L2/FL learners' ability (*understanding or comprehension*) requires the L2/FL learners to perform their comprehension by, for instances, predicting what will happen after reading the title, or summarizing main ideas, interpreting the authors' ideas or messages sent, describe the plot/conflict etc. *Applying* is the third level of practically using acquired knowledge in a new situation; *imitating* some new/authentic words, phrases or sentences to produce new paragraphs or essays, etc or be used in daily life communication or used for other purposes of oral or written communication; constructing new ideas found in the story to be then retold –a way of demonstrating, performing or practicing– in front of the class. As it labels "*analyzing*," this fourth level requires the L2/FL

learners to examine and break the information into parts (see the proposed questions above).

WorldDriveBlog, February 25, 2013

The second effect of reading English novels is to help the L2/FL learners to straightforwardly acquire vocabulary and MWEs. Let us have a look on the following picture.
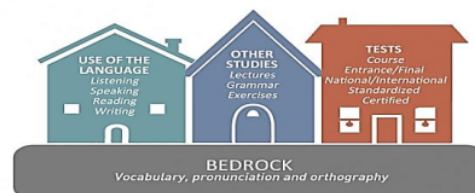


The importance of mastering vocabulary and MWES is like building a house where the homeowner and the builders should take serious notice of the quality of the bedrock of a house. A strong, sturdy, and earthquake-resistant house is a house with strong bedrock. Similarly, in terms of learning a foreign language, "English," the primary aspect that should be exceptionally paid attention by the L2/FL learners is the mastery of English vocabulary, MWEs, pronunciation and orthography to qualify the '*uses of language*' (four language skills): listening, speaking, reading and writing; '*other studies*' such as lectures, grammar and exercises; and '*tests*' like course, entrance test, final, national or international standardized test and certified test (see the picture below for details of how vocabulary and MWES in foreign language learning). To facilitate the processes of the acquisition, mastery and enrichment of the vocabulary and MWEs, the ELT researchers and practitioners are making efforts to promote the use of English novels in the EFL classrooms. Reading English novels intensively and extensively has a direct, positive impact on the L2/FL learners' capacity to build up their language skills and competencies as a whole (WordDiveBlog, February 25, 2013). Further, a leading linguist researcher, Nation (1990) articulated, "Vocabulary (and MWES if can be inserted in the Nation's justification) is not an end of itself. A rich vocabulary and MWES make the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing easier to perform."

Likewise, MWES are also the bedrock ideas of supporting the L2/FL learners' masteries of particular four language skills, other studies, and tests. Unlikely vocabulary that stands on a single word such as 'mallet (n), embroider (v), zealous (adj), decisively (adv) etc,' the MWES(phrases, word groups, etc), which are generally recognized as a large proportion of natural discourse, are (semi-)fixed word strings and combinations that are predictable by virtue of the frequent co-occurrence of their constituent words and that mastery of these sequences is one of the hallmarks of native-speaker competence (Hoang & Boers, 2016, p. 2). Furthermore, Hoang & Boers (2016, p. 2-16) affirm, "MWES come in many shapes and perform a multitude of functions such as idioms, fixed expression, euphemism, sayings/wise/proverbs/wise words (e.g., *When the cat's away*), figures of speech: lexical/grammatical collocations (e.g., *bright sunshine; make an effort, on purpose, in fact, bored with*)→ for more detail, see Benson, Benson, & Ilson (1986),

Absolute Phrase, Appositive Phrase (e.g., to become an ice skater, a bull mastiff), Gerund Phrase (e.g., Juggling knives), Infinitive Phrase (e.g., to see the movie, to write of the experience), Noun Phrase, Participial Phrase (e.g., having been lied to before), Prepositional Phrase (e.g., *by car,* in the dark woods), phrasal verbs (e.g., *sleep in*), etc (Nichol, 2017), conversational routine formulas (e.g., *How are you doing?*), discourse organizers (e.g., *Having said that*), idioms (e.g., *at the end of the day*), standardized similes (*blind as a bat*) and binomials (*rough and tumble*), compounds (e.g., *baby boom*),. Some are uninterrupted strings, while others provide sentence frames with slots to be completed (e.g., *Not only..., but...; I was wondering if..., etc*) (Hoang & Boers (2-16)."

The result of some experimental researches on MWES showed that the Native speakers' knowledge of MWES facilitates their fluent language processing. However, the L2/FLlearners do not enjoy such a processing benefit. Besides, there were found the L2/FL learners whose MWEs' knowledge and mastery are better tend to be more proficient or advanced than those whose output exhibits little evidence of such phraseological competence (the ability to adequately use phrases as well as understand their particular/unusual idiomatic meaning such as "*a kick in the teeth*" means "*very disappointing and upsetting*"). What is more, even though the L2/FL learners have seriously paid attention to the MWEs, they tend to fall short to correctly reproduce them because they are often longer than single words (vocabulary) and therefore they are more challenging (p. 3). Hoang & Boers (2016, p. 3-4) explicated that the L2/FL learners prefer using single words to idiom in their larger chunks because "single-word often substitutes idioms (e.g., *they were* **furious** vs. *They were* **up in arms**; *we'll have to* **accept** *it* vs. *We'll have to* **put up with** *it*; *don't* **lie** vs. *Don't* **tell lies**) and the L2/FL learners may consider using single words in their chunks as they are easier and safer to use rather than idioms (i.e.: **furious** (→single word) vs. **Up in arms** (→idiom). This may be an appealing avoidance strategy in case one is uncertain about the meaning of particular MWES and in case a given category of L2 MWES (e.g., phrasal verbs) is absent from the learners' L1. However, interference from the learners' L1 also occurs when members of a shared category of MWES (e.g., collocations) are not congruent (Hoang & Boers, 2016, p. 2-4)." On this basis, one of the ways of making it easy to acquire the vocabulary and MWES is to make use of English novels.

As one of the authentic materials written or produced for native speakers and '*not*' intended to be used for teaching purposes (Martinez, 2002), English novels (Genhard, 1996) can expose real language, language used in real life (community, workplaces, etc). The benefits of reading English novels are to bridge the gap between classroom and the real world (Kelly, Kelly, Offner & Vorland, 2002); as one of the characteristics of communicative language teaching, English novels can change the view of syllabus designers and EFL teachers toward English subjects, from just a language to be learned like other subjects in the school, to a very important tool of communication inside and outside the classroom (Larsen Freeman, 2000, 129); be motivating because they are proof that the language is used for real-life purpose by real people (Nuttall, 1996); bring the L2/FL learners closer to the target language culture, and therefore this will affect their

learning process overall more enjoyable and motivating (Al Azri & Al-Rashdi, 2014); bring cultural information to the learners' attention (Richards, 2001), etc.

The third is to back up the L2/FL learners' four language skills' enhancement: Reading, Speaking, Writing, Listening (RSWL). Normally, in the context of L1 acquisition, the four skills are in the order of listening first, then speaking, then possibly reading and writing. These capabilities, which are often called *LSRW skills* (Morehouse, May 18, 2017), are mostly often acquired through direct interaction between the L1 acquirers and their environments. By contrast, the L2/FL acquisition is in the sequence of reading and or listening first, then speaking, and then possibly writing. These sequences of acquiring the L2/FL, which is commonly so-called *R/LSW proficiencies*, mostly happen through attending English courses regularly, or join English training/workshop, and English private courses informally. The weakness of acquiring (learning) L2/FL is, however, the L2/FL learners hardly make use of English novels as self-development of English's mastery so that they oftentimes go through a range of difficulties of developing their language skills and competencies. Apart from attending regular and informal English classes, reading English novels ease them to orally and in writing produce language on demand and be truly understood. The point is when dealing with reading English novels, the L2/FL learners are expected to be able to acquire vocabulary, MWEs, communicate, and share their ideas in English, etc.

The fourth effect of reading English novels are to facilitate the L2/FL learners to "acquire" knowledge of, and ability to use, forms of expression that are grammatically correct (Canale & Swain, 2017 as excerpted in Diaz-Rico & weed, 2010; Gao, 201) and these capabilities are often called grammatical/linguistic competence, shortened "G/LC." G/LC focuses on command of the language code, including such things as *(knowledge of)* "*lexical items,*" the rules of word and sentence formations (morphology & grammar, syntax), meanings of words (semantics), spellings (orthography→ systems of writing a language such as letter, words, syllable, spelling, hyphenation, capitalization, word breaks, punctuation, etc (Seidenberg, 1992)) and pronunciation (phonetics and phonology) (Gao, 2001). These features, according to (Canale & Swain, 1980) effectively aid the L2/FL learners to interpret, encode, and decode words and sentences. Briefly, the point of interest of mastering G/LC is to promote accuracy and fluency in second language production (Gao, 2001), and increases in importance as the L2/FL learners advance in spoken and written proficiencies (Canale & Swain, 2017).

After reading English novels, one of the G/LC that can easily be acquired by (l2 / FL) learners is (the knowledge of) "**lexical items.**" This competence (the acquisition of lexical items) empowers the L2/FL learners to advance their language fluencies (four language skills) (please have a look on the following picture; focus on **black colored outline boxes**). It is expected (something to happen) to the L2/FL learners to be able to "**imitate**" those lexical items from their reading of English novels. Imitating lexical items from any reading resources including English novels serve and support them to grammatically have correct and accurate English expressions.

In addition to developing HOTSs and four language skills, and acquiring vocabulary, MWES and G/LC, English novels empower L1 and L2/FL learners' reading fluency. The ELT's researchers strongly recommend both L1 and L2/FL learners reading English novels. Referring to their researches on reading fluency, reading (English novels or other online/printed authentic materials) particularly afflict the L and L2/FL learners' language fluency (learners' language abilities). The best-affected areas of intensively reading English novels and other reading materials are *reading fluency*, *oral fluency*, *oral-reading fluency*, and *written or compositional fluency* (Wolfe-Quintero, Kate; Shunji, Inagaki; Hae-Young, Kim, 1998). The details of reading fluency are briefly explicated as follows.

Firstly, *reading fluency* is the ability to recognize words while reading and reading comprehension and strongly (Guillot, 1999); Rasinski & Farstrup, 2006) manifests itself in the speed and accuracy of being able to read text (Guillot, 1999). To achieve reading fluency, readers must have knowledge of the language and the content of the vocabulary being used (Rasinski & Farstrup, 2006).

Secondly, *oral fluency or speaking fluency* is the ability to produce language and able to understand and respond to others in conversation and larger chunks. Non-fluent (L1/L2, FL) speakers are characterized by the qualities of fragmentation, pauses, false starts, hesitation, repetition, etc (Schreiber, 1991; Guillot, 1999).

Thirdly, *oral reading fluency* is the (L1/L2, FL) speakers' ability to read words accurately and quickly while using good vocal expression and phrasing (Rasinski & Farstrup, 2006) lastly, *written or compositional fluency* is the ability to write (Wolfe-Quintero, et al, 1998).

The fifth effect of reading English novels are to improve the L2/FL learners' Pragmatic Competences (PC). In the EFL's teaching and learning program, some EFL teachers tend to leave out this PC. One of the reasons for overlooking it is the unavailability of EFL learning's resources for developing the competence. To the best of their understanding that the appropriate way of improving the L2/FL learners' PC is to (send for/bring in native speakers to schools/colleges and teach it) directly "interact with the native speakers." By having direct interaction with them, the L2/FL learners can go through, scrutinize, and be aware of using that language in context. What the EFL teachers propose is reasonably accepted, but under certain circumstances, it is still hardly reached out to anyway.

Consequently, such a dreamy thought, most of the L2/FL learners communicate the language inappropriately or interpret linguistic meaning (speaker's intention) in context and this becomes a primary source of cross-cultural communication failure/breakdown. As theoretically defined, PC is the ability to use language effectively in order to achieve a specific purpose and to understand language in context or (the use of language in a goal-oriented speech situation in which S [the speaker] is pragmatically using language in order to produce a particular effect in the mind of the H [the hearer] (Nordquist, March 06, 2017 in Thomas, 1983). One of the simplest ways of successfully interpreting linguistic meaning (speaker's intention) in context and avoiding the cross-cultural communication failure/breakdown is to interact with English novels. English novels provide a range of linguistic meaning in contexts. One of the many utterances often encountered when reading English novels (usually written by native speakers) is for example, "*make your own sandwich*." This utterance becomes a primary source of cross-cultural communication failure/breakdown if the L2/FL learners *literally* interpreted as follows, "s/he has someone make two slices of bread with a layer of food such as cheese or meat between them for breakfast or lunch."

Such an interpretation is commonly experienced by most L2/FL(Indonesian) learners when dealing with such a case. The reader (L2/FL (Indonesian) learners) fails to interpret the meaning/message sent by the authors and results in communication failure/breakdown. What is expected by the (native) authors tends to be or is 'violated' by the readers (L2/FL (Indonesian) learners) and it normally happens to L2/FL(Indonesian) learners. By contrast, "*make your own sandwich*" is pragmatically accepted when it is paired with the interpretation of linguistic meaning in context. *Make your own sandwich* pragmatically means "(*I*) *do not care*." Therefore, the force (illocutionary force); the speaker/author's *intention* is to "express anger (hatred, dislike or ignorance) at someone."

The aspects taken into account when dealing with pragmatics or PC are, for instances, pragmatics or PC deal with context, purposes, relative/social status, topic area, situation, speech acts, reference, deixis, structural and lexical ambiguities, etc (Li, 2008) and these take very large spaces to comprehensively discuss it in this paper. To limit the discussion, one of the most pivotal is concerned with the interpretation of (linguistic) meaning in context. As illustrated as follows, Li (2008) plainly explained the way of interpreting the (linguistic) meaning in context. Please have a look at the following picture. What does **SANDWICH** mean in context?



## IV. CONCLUSION

*Conclusions*

In conclusion, the primary goals or objectives of teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language to the L2/FL learners are to facilitate them to acquire, enhance and develop their English language skills and competencies so that they can communicate their ideas fluently. English novels provide a potentially powerful learning resources for achieving the goals. English novels set the L2/FL learners free from "life skills' distress" → the gaps between actual and the expected/desired performances contrast sharply and one of the many way-outs is to use English novels in the EFL learning's program. English novels, if are carefully and well

selected and refer and or meet the L2/FL learners' interests, taste and level of complexity of the lexical items made use of, can change their viewpoint, outlook, mind-set from de-motivated, discouraged and low achievers toward the well-motivated, encouraged and high achievers in learning English as a Second or Foreign Language. English novels, as the ELT's experts and researchers previously explicated, positively affect the L2/FL learners' language skills and competencies. What are they? English novels promote and able to develop L2/FL learners' HOTs from remembering, understanding, and applying to analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating, and creating. Besides, it is to facilitate help the L2/FL learners to straightforwardly acquire vocabulary and multiword expressions (MWEs); to back up the L2/FL learners' four language Skills' enhancement: Reading/Listening, Speaking, than Writing, (RLSW's proficiencies); to assist the L2/FL learners to "acquire" knowledge of, and ability to use, forms of expression, lexical items that are grammatically correct and accurate; to help the L2/FL learners to interpret the linguistic meaning in context and are freed from having or going through or experiencing communication failure/breakdown.

*Suggestions*

In conjunction to the stated conclusion above, the authors firstly suggest the schools or colleges' curriculum to promote English novels and other literary works as the pivotal EFL learning's resources. Secondly, the EFL teachers should not only purely focus on teaching grammatical notions but also developing the L2/FL learners' HOTSs; facilitating them to to straightforwardly acquire vocabulary and MWEs; augmenting their PC through intensively and extensively reading English novels. Selecting English novels on the basis of the L2/FL learners' needs, interests and level of difficulties guides them to enjoy reading the stories. Thirdly, Communicative Language Teaching Method is best used to learn, explore, articulate the texts (English novels) and lastly, Alternative, Authentic or Performance assessment is the right tool or model for assessing their learning outcomes.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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# Diagnosing Effect of English Novels on Augmenting EFL Learners' Language Skills and Competencies

# Diagnosing Effect of English Novels on Augmenting EFL Learners' Language Skills and Competencies

FINAL GRADE

/0

GENERAL COMMENTS

**Instructor**