

STUDENTS' VIEWS ON LITERATURE-BASED LEARNING MODEL IN OPTIMIZING ENGLISH SKILLS

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Abstract

The use of literature in language learning effectively improves students' language skills. It is because literature consists of various works such as prose, drama, and poetry that can be used as a source of extensive reading material. Therefore, using literary works for learning model trains students' receptive skills (reading) and their productive skills (speaking). This research aims to investigate students' views on the use of literature in English learning activities. The participants of this research are 6th semester students of the English language education department at Sekolah Keguruan Ilmu Pendidikan (SKIP) Yayasan Pendidikan Ujung Pandang (YPUP), with a total of 17 participants. To answer the research questions, the researchers used an exploratory case study, which employs qualitative research methods to collect data. The researchers utilized a research instrument called the self-assessment survey. Based on the results of students' views on literature-based learning model, it shows that using literature in English learning is effective for language skills development. Moreover, the use of literature also provides cultural understanding, which makes students tolerate and respect the diverse cultures of others.

Keywords: Literature-based Learning, Students' English Skills, Cultural Understanding

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INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the various communication tools used by humans. Language's role in the development of civilization and culture is critical in all aspects of life (Anas et al., 2022). Moreover, language can be defined as a mirror of human mental processes (thinking systems) that can shape the character of language users (Chomsky, 2006).

Language is defined as a system because there are interconnected elements beginning with sound (Phonetics), then the sound is transformed into words (Morphology), and finally the collection of words is structured by language users (Syntax), so that after the language has been structured, the listener can capture the meaning of the message both orally and textually (Semantics and Pragmatics) (Gee, 2011). That is why gestures and expressions – or, in popular term named, "sign communication" – cannot be defined as a language

because those both are not systematically structured as the above processes.

According to Chomsky (2006), speaking categories are divided into two types: performance and competence. These categories are similarly in line with Mur'at's (2005) classification of language skills i.e. auditive and visual abilities. The former one is to acquire language through listening and then convey the language messages through speaking.

In contrast, the latter is objectified where a person receives information through reading and express his thoughts through writing. Linguists divide language skills into two categories: receptive (listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing) (Hercik et al., 2015). Moser et al. (2018), in their analysis, discover that the skills of each English student are extremely diverse. Some students can build basic conversation/speaking skills (performance) but struggle with grammar. Some, on the other hand, have analytical skills in composing words to express notions through writing (competence), but are poor in oral communication.

In addition to the above-mentioned language skills, Kaharuddin et al. (2018) reveal that students must also understand the concept of cultural understanding (CU) of the targeted language. Because if language learners possess CU, they can maintain interactive communication with speakers of other languages. Kaharuddin et al. further state that in Western culture, asking personal questions (especially names) to start a conversation is surely inappropriate. Generally, the European society prefers to communicate or start a conversation with other speaker if the speakers introduce themselves first.

This situation contrasts with the character of the Indonesian people who perceive that asking someone's name is normal when starting a conversation. Therefore, the researchers perceive that every language learning needs an instrument – which is oriented to 1) improve students' language skills both receptive and productive, and 2) provide cultural understanding concepts for the targeted language learners.

Many researchers claim that literary works (in form prose, poetry, and drama) is a good strategy to answering the main issues above. Therefore, to study deeply about it, in this research, the researchers analyze several research questions (RQs) according to students' perception i.e. 1) Why do students prefer literature as an English learning (EL) strategy for improving their language skills? 2) What language skills do students feel improve? 3) Which literary works do students prefer for language learning activity? By elaborating three of these RQs, the researchers expect the readers can conceive that integrating literature in language learning and teaching has many benefits. Because, based on the learning activity phenomena, literature is effectively optimizing the learners' language skills in terms of receptive skills (listening & reading) and productive skills (speaking & writing).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Use of Need Analysis (NA) for Constructing the Language Learning Model

Teachers and students in an EFL learning context can work together to identify the appropriate materials that can help students to improve their language skills (Nur et al., 2022). Definitely, this situation requires a teacher to make observations related to the students' levels. Nation & Mecalister (2010) reveal that educators are advisable to use the Need Analysis (NA) approach to identify what lacks, needs, and goals of the curriculum designs are.

According to Andi & Arafah (2017), using the NA approach to examine the three points mentioned above makes it easier for teachers to create material that is appropriate to students' levels and abilities. According to Widodo (2017), the NA approach should be used in designing a learning curriculum. Widodo further states that teachers can first conduct pre-service classes or administer basic tests to assess students' understanding with the material that will be taught.

Hussain et al. (2011) Exemplify that after knowing the pre-test results and evaluating student lacks, the teacher will have an idea of what

materials students need according to their learning level (whether students are at the basic, intermediate, or even advanced levels). Automatically, by preparing the teaching material based on students' learning need, the teacher can formulate the goals and objectives of the material (Anas, 2019).

For example, in the context of improving reading skills at the junior high school (SMP) level, the teachers are recommended to provide a basic test to determine what students are lacking. After giving the test, the teachers can determine that the student's fails due to a lack of vocabulary. This condition makes students unable to comprehend the meaning contained in the reading passage. After determining the students' weakness, the teacher can provide a variety of English vocabulary that can be understood and memorized as part of the exercise. Definitely, this method is required for the young learners.

In addition, in order to maximize the students' vocabulary development, the teacher can provide enjoyable readings such as magazines or literary works (prose, poetry, and drama scripts) that are appropriate for the students' comprehension. This reading activity will help students improve their language component, specifically their vocabulary and grammar. Because, according to Deepa & Iankumaran (2018), intensive reading of literary works can significantly improve vocabulary acquisition. As a result, at the following point, this article describes the use of literary works in a language learning model based on the opinions of experts.

Theoretical Basis

Mart (2018) perceives that the use of literary works in the language learning model is very effective in improving students' language skills. Because if the learning orientation is aimed to improve the language skills (listening, reading, writing, and speaking), literary works can be a strategic solution. As Mart explains, if learners desire to practice one of the components of language, namely pronunciation, the student can read a collection of English poems and then practice the words' pronunciation on the poetry sheet.

Students can also participate in English drama/theater performances to practice their speaking and listening skills. Because when participating in drama/theater, students are expected to understand and interact with every word, sentence, idiom, and conversation written on the English drama script (Dewi, 2017). If students want to improve their extensive and intensive reading skills, they can enhance their reading material with novels or short stories (Jacobs & Renandya, 2015).

In fact, Bartan (2017) does not hesitate to state that reading literary works has a positive impact on the development of students' writing creativity. This is because reading literary works not only enriches information and knowledge but also ignites students' imaginations, allowing them to express and be creative in transmitting their heartfelt and mindfelt opinions.

This creativity may be evident in how students use words that impact the reader's perspective, write sentence structures that are simple to grasp, and choose themes for essays that suits with the readers' personal image (Alwasilah, 2006). In addition to strengthening language abilities, as indicated by various researchers above, Banna & Fitra (2018) highlighted that literary works have unique and fascinating tale material that can inspire pupils to read.

It is said due to literary works are products of thought that cannot be separated from the culture of the storyteller (Faruk, 2015), which guiding foreign language students to understand the meaning and context of a story. In reality, the terms used by the characters in the novel (idioms, terminology, slang, and poetic words) can be utilized and expressed in a daily conversation. Therefore, from all the experts' statement above, this article aims to examine the effectiveness of using literature in optimizing students' language skills (in terms of listening, reading, speaking and writing).

METHODS

Research Design

This article applies exploratory case study which employing qualitative research method to

collecting data related to students' view on using literary works in developing their English language abilities. For collecting the data related to students' perception, the researchers used pseudonyms (e.g., Roberto Carlos/RC, Cristiano Ronaldo/CR Muhammad Sofyan/MS, etc.).

Participants

The participants in this article were students of sixth semester in English Language Education program from Sekolah Tinggi Keguruan Ilmu Pendidikan (STKIP) Yayasan Pendidikan Ujung Pandang (YPUP), who enrolled a subject of Literature in English Language Teaching (ELT). The total of participants were 17 students. Most of the students were female (12 Students) and the rest of them were male (5 students).

Instrument

Before explaining the instrument used to collect the expected data, the researchers had to classify types of data into two categories: main data (primary data) and supporting data (supporting data). The former data were the percentage of students' perception. Meanwhile, the later data were the articles, books, and paper conference which related to the researchers' concern. Therefore, in order to collect these two data (especially for the primary data), the instrument used in this research was self-assessment survey which require digital questionnaire through Google Form application.

Besides, the researchers also applied likert scale to perceive students' perception satisfaction, comfort, and learning effectiveness (regarding the literature-based learning model in Optimizing language Skills) with variable answers from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree).

In self-assessment survey, the researchers also provided students' descriptive comment if they had an alternative perspective with the question. With the descriptive comment, students could write their thoughts independently related to what they feel about literature-based learning model

Procedure

In doing this research, the researchers firstly asked permission to the instructor/teacher of the Literature in ELT class to join their virtual class from the first meeting until the final test of the class. There were 16 meetings of this virtual class. For 1-12 meeting the researchers observed the learning activity in virtual class. Then, 13-15 meeting the researchers designed the research and questionnaire of the research which hopefully responded by students.

Secondly, in the last meeting of the virtual class, the researchers re-joined the virtual class to explain the purpose of this research to students. After explaining that, the researchers gave the link of google form questionnaire which expected filled by all students in the class regarding to their views on Literature-based learning model in Optimizing language skills. Finally, after collecting the students' answer as the main data, the researchers analyzed it afterwards.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As has been explained in introduction point that this research focuses on elaborating three RQ i.e., 1) Why do students prefer literature as an English learning (EL) strategy for improving their language ski? 2) What kind of language skills do students feel significantly improved? 3) Which literary works do students prefer for language learning activity?

Why Do Students Prefer Literature as an EL Strategy for Improving Their Language Skills?

According to the data findings in the research questionnaire, there are 52,9% or 9 of 17 students agree that using literature as learning instrument can help them to optimize their English language skills. Meanwhile, 35,3% or 6 of 17 students strongly agree that learning English using literature is effective to improve their language skills. On the other hand, 11,8% or 2 of 17 students, smallest percentages, disagree that literature is an effective way to improve language skills. This data can be seen in the graph below:

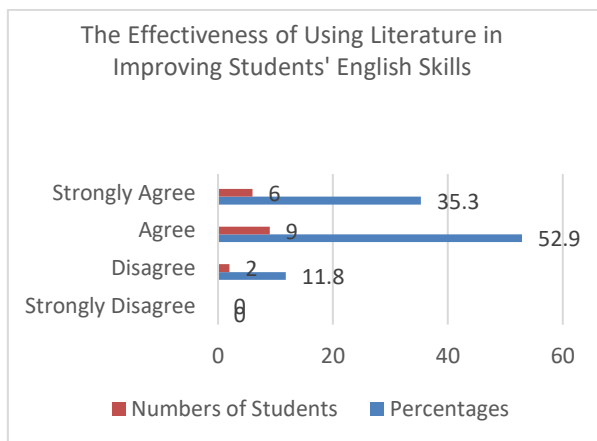


Figure 1. Percentages of The Effectiveness of Using Literature in Improving Students' English Skills

From the Figure 1, it can be seen that most of 17 students agree and even strongly agree that using literature as a learning strategy is effective in improving their language skills. The reasons because every literary works (e.g., prose, poetry, and drama) have functions which contributes to students' language proficiency development.

For example, to practice students' reading skills, they can utilize prose (short story or novel) as a learning instrument because by reading prose, students can enrich their vocabulary and understand how grammatical form structures the sentence written in the prose. Therefore, students will familiar with written expression when reading literary works (Strong, 1996).

Furthermore, if students would like to improve both their speaking and listening skills, students can utilize drama/theater which encourage them to interact (as a drama character) each other which based on the drama script (Dewi, 2017). Finally, if students would like to develop their creative writing, they can apply poetry-based writing due to the various lexicon/ terms, the author' ideology, and imagination presented in poetry (Kırkgöz, 2008). Therefore, according to English experts above, integrating literature for language skills development is effective.

Moreover, with the creativity of integrating literature in teacher's teaching model, students enjoy to lesson given by their teacher. This learning phenomena can be perceived in the bellow bar graph:

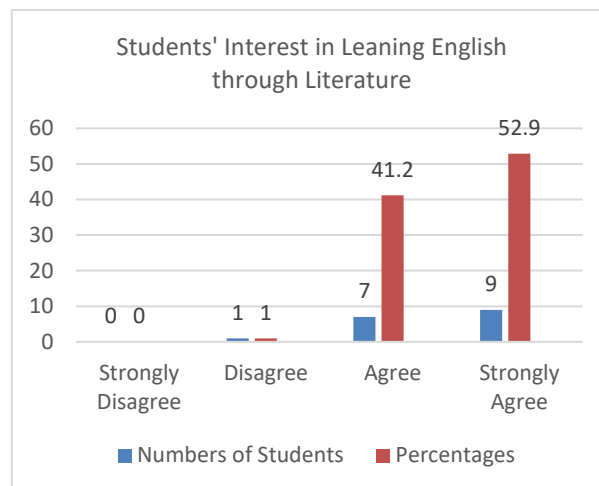


Figure 2. Percentages of Students' Interest in Learning English Through Literature

The above bar graph shows, 52,9% or 9 of 17 students strongly agree that they enjoy learning English when literature is used in their class. Furthermore, 7 of 17 students (41,2%) agree that literature-based learning is enjoyable for their learning activity. Unfortunately, it can be denied that there is one student (5,9%) do not like studying English through literature at all.

Although the above data shows that most students are interested to learn English through literature but educators should discover a good teaching approach that can encourage their students in loving literature as a teaching instrument. Lazar (2009), states that in order to make EFL student love literature used as learning tool, educators can apply varied ways such as **a)** providing students literary works which suitable with their learners' English level, **b)** educators let students choose books/literary works based on the favorite genres, **c)** teachers give times for students to read their favorite book/literary work, **d)** After giving time for students to read their favorite literary work, educators encourage each student to do presentation in front of their class mate.

By applying Lazar's teaching and learning model above, students are trained to their reading skills as well as their speaking skill (students' presentation). As a result, the lesson will be enjoyable and students effectively improve their language skills.

What kind of Students' Language Skills Significantly Improved?

The researchers had elaborated in previous point that the use of literature effectively improves students' language skills. However, the previous point does not discuss it in detail about the types of students' language skills specifically improved. Therefore, in this point the researchers would like to elaborate which language skills that students feel improve during studying English through literature by showing the data in pie chart below:

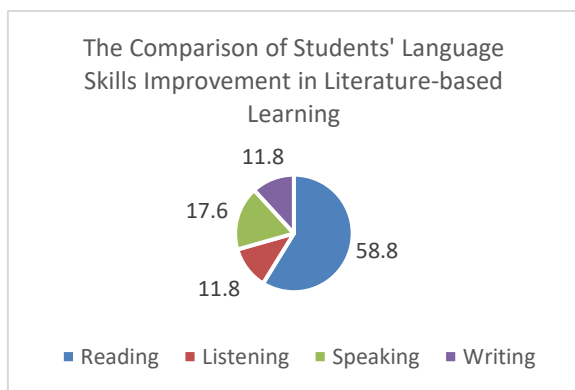


Figure 3. The Comparison of Students' Language Skills Improvement in Literature-based Learning Model

The above pie chart demonstrates the proportion of language skills development which based on students' preference. According to the pie chart above, reading skills is the top percentage (58.8% or 10 of 17 students), followed by speaking

tend to provide students with literary text. Automatically, it encourages students to do extensive reading in order to comprehend the literary text (story) itself.

According to the descriptive data (based on students' answer when respond to open-ended questionnaire about their language skills development), most of them perceive that literary works, especially poetry, helps them to enrich their vocabulary. Definitely, having a lot of vocabulary influence their reading skills and guide them to comprehend any literary text. Nevertheless, the use of literature is not only increasing students' reading skills but also it trains other's skills.

Some students perceive that the use of literary work (called drama) is an interesting leaning approach for developing speaking skills. It is because, using drama encourage students to memorize the drama script which help them to understand how the language component (e.g., vocabulary use, grammatical form, and pronunciation) used for real social interaction.

Furthermore, poetry triggers students to practice their listening skills due to the intonation and word pronunciation when expressed by poet. Finally, for creative writing skills development, students can utilize novel or short story because of containing various vocabulary, imagination and knowing how grammatical form structured into sentence (as Bartan (2017) said in the theoretical basis).

Table 1. Students' Responses on Language Skills Improvement when Applying Literature-based Learning Model

Respondent's Initial Name	Responds	Skills Category
ARB	"I think, by using drama, <u>we can practice our speaking skill</u> and communication".	Speaking Skills
ND	"I like studying English using drama script, because <u>it encourages us to read and memorize</u> the character's conversation".	Listening Skills
JSK	"The use of poetry in English class not only train the word pronunciation and how it sounds. <u>But it also trains our listening skill</u> ".	Reading Skills
SA	"In Prose (novel), there is an idea, imagination and creativity of authors. Therefore, if we Use novel in our English learning, <u>it can contribute to our creative writing, especially if we want to be a writer</u> ".	Writing Skills

skills 17.6% or 3 of 17 students, and 11.8% or 2 of 17 students for writing and listening skills. This means that the use of literature as learning tool

From the Table 1, it can be concluded that every language skill can be developed through literary works. The use of literature oriented to

improve English proficiency depends on what language skills students want to improve. For example, those students who desire to improve their reading skills, they can read numerous literary texts with different themes and genres of works (see ND statement). This is an example how literary work used for the particular language skills development.

Which Types of Literary Works do Students Prefer for Language Learning Activity?

To elaborate more about students' preference towards types of literary works in English learning, the researchers show the graph below:

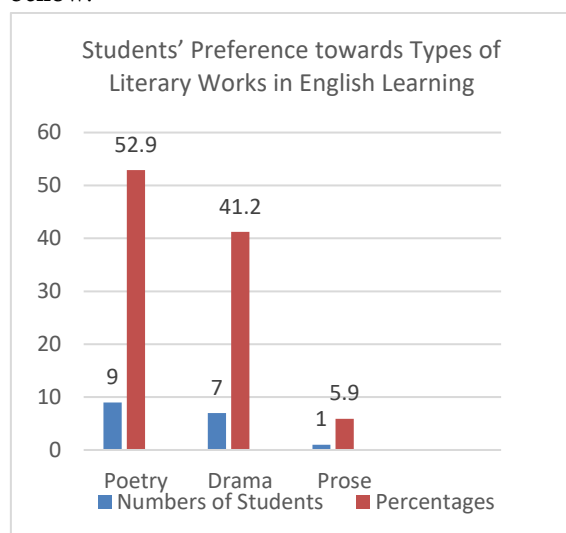


Figure 4. Students' Preference towards Types of Literary Works in English Learning Model

This graph is line to the above students' perception that poetry and drama are enjoyable used in English learning activity for the language skills development. As can be seen that the highest percentage in the graph is poetry (52,9% equivalent to 9 of 17 students). Afterwards, 7 students of 17 prefer drama as learning tool for developing language skill (41,2%). The lowest percentage (5.9% or 1 of 17 students) is prose as learning instrument for language skills development.

Besides, some students argue that the use of literary works (particularly for poetry) in English learning does not only develop learners' language skills but also provide a multi-cultural understanding for them. So that students become tolerable and respect to cultural form of others.

Regarding to this issue, Doering (1997) state that with literature-based English learning, students as a literary reader, can conceive the author's ideology, experience and socio-cultural background. It is because literary works is defined as mirror of social life or social life's miniature. Therefore, in side of the literary story, there must be cultural interest, political ideology, author's experience, etc.

This is felt by one of participant i.e., NH when expressing her thought towards benefits of using literary work as a learning instrument. She states that reading literary works makes us understand and admit others' culture which has a different with students' cultural background. That is why, it will lead students to become tolerable and multi-cultural person. This can be read as follow:

"I think this (literature used in English learning activity) is the advantages things when integrating it into language learning activity. Because it does not only train our four language skills, but also give us insights about various culture written by literary authors. This makes us respect and tolerate in facing diversity in real social life".

Therefore, from this learning phenomena it can be summed up that literature-based English learning provides many benefits for students. Even though (if it is referred to numerical and descriptive data above) the major benefit is four English skills development but it also remarkable for teaching cultural diversity.

CONCLUSION

Theoretically, as has been mentioned by Lazar (2009); Bartan (2017); and Mart (2018) that the use of literature in the language learning activity is very effective in improving students' language skills. This can be proved from the finding data (see figure 1), that most of the 6th semester students of English department at SKIP YPUP agree to this issue. Because, in literature-based English leaning, students independently can prefer any literary works (e.g. prose, drama, and poetry) which are based on their favorite genres and suitable to students' language level. This learning situation makes them recognize and love to read literary works. During their literary works' reading, students automatically develop their language components (vocabulary, grammar, and

pronunciation) which fundamentally needed in language skills development. Therefore, the more students read literary works, the more they improve their language skills. Moreover, another issue is discovered that the use of literature in English learning is not only increasing students' language skills, but also enriching cultural understanding due to the diversity of authors' social background, political/ideological thoughts and environment. So that students respect and tolerate towards different culture of others.

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