



THE USE OF LITERATURE IN THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM AT A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION IN INDONESIA

SUKARDI WEDA ^{a*}, FATHU RAHMAN ^b AND ANDI ELSA FADHILAH SAKTI ^a

^a English Department, Faculty of Languages and Literature, Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia.

^b English Department, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Hasanuddin, Indonesia.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Received: 27 December 2021

Accepted: 02 March 2022

Published: 04 March 2022

Original Research Article

ABSTRACT

To achieve curriculum target in the language classroom, there are a variety of teaching authentic materials employed in the language classroom and one of the intriguing authentic materials is literature. This present study aims at exploring the students' perception on the use of literature at higher education in Makassar, Indonesia. The subjects of the study were the students of English Department of the Faculty of Languages and Literature State University of Makassar, Indonesia. There were 30 students participated in the study. The study therefore reveals that literature can improve students' language awareness. This is because, the use of literature in the language classroom is interesting authentic material, and the study reveals that the use of literature in the language classroom is vital and it has pedagogical, methodic, and didactic value.

Keywords: Literature; language classroom; language awareness; higher education institution; Indonesia.

1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching English is not an easy job and acquire high proficiency in English is also not an easy job. To be competent in English, the teachers at schools and the lecturers at the universities employ various teaching methods and use various authentic materials. One of the intriguing authentic materials is literary work. The use of literature for language teaching purposes has become a vital issue in language teaching [1: 45]. The teaching and learning of literature have become new teaching aids [2].

Many scholars and researchers have shown the importance of the inclusion of literary work with its various types in the language classroom [3- 5, 1, 6, 7- 11].

Lima [12, 112] mentions that the inclusion of literature, short stories and poems in English language teaching brings a wide variety of experience, the creative exploration of language, meaningful and creative content, and a habit of reading and the language learners would be able to critically and creatively respond the literary texts they read.

Collie and Slater as cited in Erdem [13: 158] mention four reasons why a language teacher should employ literary texts in their various types in the language classroom. This is because, literature is an authentic material, it can enrich students' language awareness, to enhance students' understanding of different cultures and to enable student involvement in the learning – teaching process. Basiga [14: 1] argues

*Corresponding author: Email: sukardiweda@yahoo.com;

that teaching a language by using a variety of literary genres avoids the hazards of teaching the language in a didactic and a mechanical way.

The research question guiding this research is as follows: To what extent of students' perception on the use of literature in the language classroom in higher education?

3. METHOD

3.1 Participants of the Study

This present study was carried out in a subject taught by the authors on Literature in English Language Teaching (LELT). The subjects of this study were 30 students of English Literature Study Program of Faculty of Languages and Literature State University of Makassar in 2019/2020 academic year. The subjects were the students of Undergraduate Degree in the sixth semester on Literature in Language Teaching (LLT) subject. Before conducting the study in the classroom, the researchers asked the students to participate in the study and the researchers told the students the purpose of the study.

3.3 Instrument and Procedure of Data Collection

In other to answer the research questions of the present study, participants were asked to mark their responses on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire of the study was designed to explore the students' perceptions at English department of Faculty of Languages and Literature State University of Makassar towards the used of literary text in the language classroom.

3.4 Analytical Procedure

This study applies descriptive statistics using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for descriptive statistics to measure the mean, percentage, weight, and the rank of the students' perception on the use of literary text in the language classroom followed by descriptions and explanations of each item measured.

4. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The main focus of this present study is to identify the students' perception on the use of literature in EFL classroom at higher education. The students were also asked about the level of difficulties in understanding the literature with its various types.

Table 1 shows the level of difficulties in understanding literary text in the language classroom.

Table 1. Level of difficulties in understanding literary text

State level of difficulties in understanding a literary text!	
Strongly difficult (3)	10%
Difficult (10)	33.33%
Somewhat difficult (17)	56.66%
n 30	

The data above shows that 56.66% of respondents stated that it was somewhat difficult and 33.33% of them stated that it was difficult to understand a literary text.

Table 2 shows the level of difficulties in understanding prose or story in the language classroom.

Table 2. Level of difficulties in understanding prose or fiction

State level of difficulties in understanding prose or story!	
Strongly difficult (3)	10%
Difficult (5)	16.66%
Somewhat difficult (22)	73.33%
n 30	

The data above shows that 73.33% of respondents stated that it was somewhat difficult, 16.66% of them stated that it was difficult to understand story, and 10% of them stated it was strongly difficult to understand story.

Table 3 shows the level of difficulties in understanding poetry in the classroom setting at the university level.

Table 3. Level of difficulties in understanding poetry

State level of difficulties in understanding poetry!	
Strongly difficult (7)	23.33%
Difficult (10)	33.33%
Somewhat difficult (13)	43.33%
n 30	

The data above shows that 43.33% of respondents stated that it was somewhat difficult, 33.33% of them stated that it was difficult to understand poetry, and there were 23.33% of them was strongly difficult to understand poetry. The difficulties in understanding and appreciating both prose (short story) and poetry

are mostly caused by stylistic of the authors, linguistic deviation, cultural background of the plot, and specific terms used in certain literary texts.

Table 4 shows the students' perception on the use of literary works in language classroom at higher education.

The highest response for statement number 1 (The use of literature in the language classroom is interesting authentic material.) was Agree with 66.7%. Fernandes and Alsaed [15: 126] state that the literature becomes an intriguing authentic material which can help students change the educational system ensuring that the learning – teaching process in EFL classroom are more enjoyable.

The highest response for statement number 2 (Literary works (literary texts) in the language classroom can motivate students to learn the language.) was Agree with 56.7%. Vural [16: 15] argues that the use of literary texts in language classroom can nurture learning and it becomes motivational resources in second language and/or foreign language teaching through a variety of language skills.

The highest response for statement number 3 (Literature is interesting in the language classroom because it is fun and entertains.) was Agree with 56.7%.

The highest response for statement number 4 (Literature can improve students' language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing) was

Table 4. Students' Perception on the Use of Literary Works in Language Classroom

No.	Students' Perception	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Weight (%)	Rank
1.	The use of literature in the language classroom is interesting authentic material.	0	6.7	3.3	66.7	23.3	4.0667	90	3
2.	Literary works (literary texts) in the language classroom can motivate students to learn the language.	0	0	20.0	56.7	23.3	4.0333	79.6	8
3.	Literature is interesting in the language classroom because it is fun and entertains.	0	3.3	16.7	56.7	23.3	4.0000	80	7
4.	Literature can improve students' language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).	0	0	10.0	36.7	53.3	4.4333	90	3
5.	Literature can improve students' language elements (grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation).	0	3.3	30.0	36.7	30.0	3.9333	66.7	9
6.	Literature can improve students' cultural knowledge of the target language.	0	0	0	70.0	30.0	4.3000	100	1
7.	Literature can improve educational value.	0	6.7	13.3	63.3	16.7	3.9000	80	7
8.	Literature can improve social value.	0	0	13.3	46.7	40.0	4.2667	86.7	4
9.	Literature can improve religious value.	0	0	43.3	46.7	10.0	3.6667	56.7	10
10.	Literature can enhance students' critical thinking.	0	0	43.3	46.7	10.0	4.1000	56.7	10
11.	Literature can enhance students' self-confidence.	0	0	36.7	50.0	13.3	3.7667	63.3	11
12.	Literature can enhance students' emotion and imagination.	0	0	6.7	53.3	40.0	4.3333	93.3	2
13.	Literature can enhance students' creativity.	0	0	16.7	50.0	33.3	4.1667	83.3	6
14.	Literature can enhance social interaction.	0	0	13.3	60.0	26.7	4.1333	86.7	4
15.	Literature can promote social harmony and tolerance in the pluralistic society.	0	3.3	13.3	46.7	36.7	4.1667	83.4	5

Strongly Agree with 53.3%. In keeping with this, Vural [16: 15] suggests that the use of literary works,

enhances learning and it becomes motivational means in second or foreign language teaching through integrated macro skills, reading, speaking, writing, and listening. Accordingly, Erdem [13: 161] asserts that literary texts are great authentic sources for free discussions in the language classroom which can enhance students' speaking, listening, writing, and reading skills.

The highest response for statement number 5 (Literature can improve students' language elements: grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation) was Agree with 36.7%.

The highest response for statement number 6 (Literature can improve students' cultural knowledge of the target language.) was Agree with 70%. Literature has a number of advantages which include unique material, stimulation of learners' development and contribution to their vocabulary and cultural enrichment [13: 157].

The highest response for statement number 7 (Literature can improve educational value.) was Agree with 63.3%. The highest response for statement number 8 (Literature can improve social value.) was Agree with 46.7%. The highest response for statement number 9 (Literature can improve religious value.) was Agree with 46.7% [17].

The highest response for statement number 10 (Literature can enhance students' critical thinking.) was Agree with 46.7%. Chi-An Tung and Shu-Ying Chang [18: 287] mention that literary text reading helped the students to enhance their overall critical thinking skills.

The highest response for statement number 11 (Literature can enhance students' self-confidence.) was Agree with 50.0%. The highest response for statement number 12 (Literature can enhance students' emotion and imagination.) was Agree with 53.3%. The highest response for statement number 13 (Literature can enhance students' creativity.) was Agree with 50.0%.

The highest response for statement number 14 (Literature can enhance social interaction.) was Agree with 60.0%.

The highest response for statement number 15 (Literature can promote social harmony and tolerance in the pluralistic society.) was Agree with 46.7%.

The highest rank of the students' statement was number 6 (Literature can improve students' cultural knowledge of the target language.) with 100% weight.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This present study tries to investigate the students' perception on the use of literature in language classroom. The study therefore concludes that literature can improve students' cultural knowledge of the target language, Literature can enhance students' emotion and imagination, The use of literature in the language classroom is interesting authentic material, Literature can improve students' language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), and literary text can also enhance students' social, educational, and religious values. The study overall reveals that the use of literature in the language classroom is vital and it has pedagogical, methodic, and didactic value. The researchers therefore suggest to the language teachers and practitioners to employ literary text with its various genres to the target students' language and cultural awareness.

CONSENT

The students' consent is intended to build a good rapport before the study.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

REFERENCES

1. Tehan, Patricia; Yuksel, Dogan, Inan, Banu. The place of literature in an English language teaching program: What do students think about it?. *The Reading Matrix: An International Online Journal*. September 2015;15(2):45 – 52.
2. Gashi-Berisha, Valbona, Kamberi, Nerimane. Methodology of teaching literature with digital means. *XLinguae*. January 2019;12(1XL):145 – 160.
3. Bloemert, Jsmijn; Jansen, Ellen, van de Grift, Wim. Exploring EFL literature approaches in Dutch secondary education. *Language, Culture, and Curriculum*. 2016;29(2):169 – 188.
4. Pushpa VK, Savaedi, Seyed Yousef. Teaching poetry in autonomous ELT classes. *Procedia, Social and Behavioral Sciences, International Conference on Current Trends in ELT*. 2014;98(2014):1919 – 1925.
5. Albalawi, Bashayer Raghian. Effectiveness of teaching English subject using drama on the development of students' creative thinking. *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in*

- Education (IOSR-JRME). 2014;4(6):Ver. 1 (Nov – Dec. 2014):54 – 63.
6. Paquette, Kelli R, Rieg, Sue A. Using music to support the literacy development of young English language learners. *Early Childhood Educ J.* 2008;36:227 – 232.
 7. Huertas, Ivon Aleida Castro, Parra, Lina Jazmin Navarro. The role of songs in first-graders' oral communication development in English. *PROFILE.* 2014;16(1):11 – 28.
 8. Hayati, Abdomajid, Mohmedi, Firooz. The effect of films with and without subtitles on listening comprehension of EFL learners. *British Journal of Educational Technology.* 2011;42(1):181 – 192.
 9. Zafeiriadou, Nelly. Drama in language teaching: A challenge for creative development. 2009 March;23:4 – 9.
 10. Cunnigham, Clare. 'Keep talking': using music during small group discussions in EAP. *ELT Journal.* 2014;68/2 April 2014:179 – 191.
 11. Khatib, Mohammad, Akari, Hossein. A study of the effects of teaching literature on improving students' second language attitudes. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature.* September 2012;1(4): 37 – 45.
 12. Lima, Cris. Selecting literary texts for language learning. *Journal of NELTA.* December 2010;15(1-2)110 – 113.
 13. Erdem, Mustafa. Literature in English Language Teaching. *European Journal of Language and Literature Studies.* Jan-Apr 2016;4(1):157 – 162.
 14. Basiga, Brenda. Teaching English as a second language through literature. *The Asian EFL Journal Cebu Conference Proceedings.* August 2009;1 – 6.
 15. Fernandes, Lilly, Alsaeed, Nora Hadi Q. Using English literature for the teaching of English. *International Journal of English and Literature Studies.* 2014;3(2):126 – 133.
 16. Vural, Haldun. Use of literature to enhance motivation in ELT classes. *Mevlana International Journal of Education (MIJE).* 2013;3(4):1 December, 2013:15 – 23.
 17. Coyle, Yvette, Cracia, Remei Gómez. Using songs to enhance L2 vocabulary acquisition in preschool children. *ELT Journal.* 2014;68/3 July 2014:276 – 285.
 18. Chi-An Tung, Shu-Ying Chang. Developing Critical Thinking through Literature Reading. *Feng Chia Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences.* December 2009;19:287 – 317.