



## **INDONESIAN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS LITERATURE IN ENGLISH**

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### **Abstract**

This study aimed to investigate senior high school students' attitude towards advantages of learning literature in English. The participants of this research were 22 eleventh grade students in SMAN 2 Padang who took English as Specialization class. This study was descriptive qualitative research used in investigating senior high school students' attitude towards literature in English. The instrumentations of this research were questionnaire and interview. The following are advantages of learning literature in English, encouraging language sources, improving language skill, expanding students' awareness through environment and willingness to learn English language. The findings of the research showed that students' attitude towards advantages of learning literature in English is positive.

**Key words:** Attitude, Literature in English.

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

Curriculum 2013 has been applied since 2014 in order to replace the previous curriculum: Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP). Moreover, this alteration causes changes in subjects which are taught in school and new regulation related to those subjects. After the implementation of curriculum 2013, students may choose other subjects outside of their compulsory subject. It is generally known as specialization class.

In regards to the study of literature in English Language Teaching (ELT), some scholars argue that learning literature are beneficial for students (Celly, 2009; Hanauer, 2012; Choudhary, 2016). Among those advantages of learning literature, there are five broad categories of the benefits. First, learning literature improves students' language ability (Ghosn, 2002; Van, 2009; Rashid & Rahman, 2010; Tevdovska, 2016; Alkhaleefah, 2017; Kaşlıoğlu & Ersin, 2018). Second, learning literature as a media to learn other culture (Lazar, 1993; Ghosn, 2002; Van, 2009; Rashid and Rahman, 2010; Khatib, 2012; Fenner, 2016; Tevdovska, 2016; Kaşlıoğlu and Ersin, 2018).

According to curriculum 2013, student has an important role in teaching-learning process. According with Permendikbud No. 65 year 2013, Curriculum 2013 students are required to be more active in the class. They need to think critically in identifying, understanding, solving the problem and implementing the knowledge in students' life, (Hakim, 2017). For example, students may give

opinion to teacher about teaching method or materials are given. For instance, students may have wants and needs in method or materials that are used by teacher. They also can express their attitude, belief, opinion or perspective about the subjects are taught to them and how the subjects are taught by the teacher.

In this case, the study about students' attitude is important since learning literature in English is new in Indonesian curriculum. Abu-Snoubar (2017) claimed that language learning cannot be separated with students' attitudes because they are supporting and motivating when positive and totally demotivating when negative. Similarly, students' attitude can be used as consideration of the success in teaching learning process (Abidin, Pour-Mohammadi & Alzwari, 2012; Othman et al, 2015; Zulfikar, Dahliana and Sari, 2019). It can be a reflection whether the way, method or material that used by teachers are proper with students' wants.

In Indonesia context, teaching and learning literature that is mandated by curriculum 2013 is new. Thus, the study of literature in Indonesia context is still far between. for instance, Rahmi (2016) have conducted about teachers', parents' and students' readiness in implementing English literature by asking their perspective. Then, there are studies about analyzing students' difficulties in translating poetry (Weda, 2010; Sigalingging, 2018). Also, Novianti (2016) investigated about teaching English literature in EFL students in Indonesia tertiary education.

However, there is still small number of researches in analyzing senior high school students' attitude toward literature in English that can be used to identify their opinion and as a reflection of learning process, students' needs in learning literature text and improvement from the weaknesses of the instruction. As the result, there is significance changes in literature text learning process. Theoretically, this research will give contribution to curriculum evaluator as evaluation to improve students' and teachers' book as guidance in learning English specialization: literature text. Also, it can be as sources for other researchers to conduct similar subject. Practically, the study is also expected to give contribution to English specialization class. Thus, teachers who teach literature text in senior high school to improve their skill in teaching literature text based on students' perspective. By using it, learning process will based on students' need and demand in teaching-learning process in the classroom. At the end, it will increase not only students' ability in understanding the literature text, but also students' mark in examination.

Attitude is opinion and feeling that everyone has about something, Eshghinejad (2016). Meanwhile, attitude in general is a hypothetical psychological construct which defines or promotes certain behaviors and explains their direction and persistence, Al-Mamun, Rahman, Rahman and Hossaim, (2012). Moreover, attitudes tend to have features of some stability and tend to lead to certain relatively consistent patterns of behavior, Rajab (2007). Attitude also involves cognitive, affective and behavioral elements. Thus, attitude to language is a construct that explains linguistic behavior in particularly, Al-Mamun, Rahman, Rahman and Hossaim, (2012). Therefore, attitude is

considered as an essential factor in language performance and received considerable attention from researcher, Eshghinejad, (2016).

According to Zulfikar, Dahliana and Sari (2019), students' positive attitudes toward language learning are the students feel happy while learning language and be actively engaged in learning process. Whereas, negative attitudes are shown when students may feel anxious in learning process; students feel difficult to engage to the material given; students are bored.

There are some reasons for using literature in the classroom, Lazar (1993):

1. Motivating material. Mostly countries in this world agree that literature is exclusively beneficial. Students of English may feel the sense of goal at tackling literary material in the class. If students are familiar with literature in their own language, then they learn literature in English can give an interesting and thought-provoking point of comparison.
2. Access to cultural background. Literature offers students to access others culture whose language they are studying. Yet, this situation still in complexity. For instance, since few novels or poems could claim to be a purely factual documentation of their society.
3. Encouraging language acquisition Literature may provide a particularly appropriate way of stimulating this acquisition, as it provides meaningful and memorable contexts for processing and interpreting new language. Obviously, at lower levels, students may be unable to cope on their own with an authentic novel or short story in English.
4. Expanding students' language awareness. Literary language, poetry is somehow different from other forms of discourse in that it breaks the more usual rules of syntax, collocation and even cohesion. Teachers often express concern that in using literature with our students, we are exposing them to 'wrong' uses of language.
5. Developing students' interpretative abilities. Any learning of a new language would seem to involve the learner in the forming of hypotheses and the drawing of inferences, whether these relate to when a particular idiom is used appropriately, how far a grammatical rule can be generalized or what is implied behind the literal meaning of what someone says in a conversation. Educating the whole person
6. Studying literature in the classroom helps students to stimulate their imagination, to develop their critical abilities and to increase their emotional awareness. If we ask students to respond personally to the texts, we give them, they will become increasingly confident about expressing their own ideas and emotions in English. They will feel empowered by their ability to grapple with the text and its language, and to relate it to the values and traditions of their own society.

## **B. RESEARCH METHOD**

This was descriptive research with qualitative approach. According to Lambert and Lambert (2012), qualitative descriptive approach is designed to describe of phenomenon. This study would describe the phenomenon of senior high school students' attitude towards literature in English. All attitude towards literature

in English as the data would be described in percentage which strengthened by interview.

Population of this study was 64 students in Eleventh grade in SMAN 2 Padang which were in social science class. In this study, the researcher would take 40% of the population as the sample because she used cluster sampling. There are two instruments used, questionnaire as the primary instrumentation and interview as secondary instrumentation. The questionnaire was validated by lecturers who teach at English Language and Literature Department, Faculty of Language and Art, Universitas Negeri Padang. Table analysis is used to collect the data of grammatical cohesive devices. Then, the data will be percentage to find out the students' attitude towards literature in English.

### C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### 1. Research Finding (tentative)

The data were taken from 22 students in Eleventh grade in SMAN 2 Padang which were in social science class. The data were classified based on the advantages of learning literature. Finally, the data were calculated to find out percentage of students' attitude toward advantages of learning literature.

Table 1.

Advantages of learning literature		
No	statement	%
7.	I think I can improve my proficiency in the English language through literature lessons	95
14.	Many moral values can be learned through reading literature	86
15.	Literature can motivate my interest in learning the English language	77
16.	I learn many new words when I read literary text	100

In general, table 3 shows the most of the students believe that learning literature has advantages in their both academic and daily life. To illustrate it, all of the students (100%) agree that they get new vocabulary when reading literature in English. They claimed that literary works such as poetry, novel and short story contain many words which enrich their language sources. With the presence of unknown words encourages the students to look for the meaning in dictionary and Google-translate. Hence, those new word will be kept in their mind. The following are students' claim about the advantage:

- a) Student 3: *"meningkat. Soalnya ada beberapa yang kadang dalam lagu itu kata-kata yang aku nggak tahu kan aku cari artinya jadi kadang aku ingat-ingat gitu."*  
(my vocabulary improved. Because there are some words in the text that I do not know the meaning, and I am going to look for the meaning. Therefore, I remember what are they).
- b) Student 4: *"Meningkat kak. Kan banyak tuh yang kata yang baru dinda pelajari. Kayak kosa kata baru yang dinda temui."*



(My vocabulary improved because there are many new words that I learned. For example, new word that I found and I knew the meaning).

- c) Student 5: *“meningkat sih meningkat tapi nggak terlalu tinggi juga sih masih saya hanya naik satu satu gitu lah”*  
(My vocabulary improved slowly).

Based on the statement above, students got improvement in language sources. They claimed that while reading the text, they would get new word. Then they translated the word by using dictionary or Google-translate tool. They are going to remember what the meaning of those words. Therefore, when they are asked to read something else in English, for example passage in their text book, they got ease to understand what the passage tells about. Moreover, they could speak English fluently because they have enough vocabulary.

Then, 95% of the students believe that they could improve their English language proficiency through literature in English lesson. Regarding to proficiency in English language, the researcher asked the students about their skill in speaking, reading, listening and writing. Most of them claimed that their skills are improved by learning literature in English. First, most of them believed that skill is the most improved is speaking. The following are students' claim related to improvement:

- a) Student 1: *“speaking pasti meningkat.”*  
(My speaking skill definitely improve).
- b) Student 2: *“ya tentu karena sering berlatih karya sastra berbahasa Inggris contohnya yaitu saya lebih lancar speaking dalam Bahasa Inggris didepan umum dan tidak grogi lagi.”*  
(Yes of course, my speaking skill is getting improved. I always read aloud a literature in English. Therefore, I speak English more fluently and I am not nervous anymore).
- c) Student 3: *“kalau speaking aku rasa meningkat”*  
(I think my speaking skill improve).
- d) Student 4: *“Iya kak”*  
(Yes, my speaking skill improve).
- e) Student 5: *“jujur sih ada sedikit meningkat”*  
(Honestly, my speaking skill a little bit improved”

Based on the statements above, students' ability in speaking improved by learning literature in English. Some of them implicitly told that they tend to imitate how the singer pronounce the lyric. Therefore, they had ability in good pronouncing the words. Sometimes, they tend to sing a song in English which drill their ability in English speaking.

Second, the students claimed that literature in English can give positive impact toward their reading skill. The following are students' claim related to improvement:

- a) Student 1: *“ikut meningkat juga.”*  
(my reading skill improves too).
- b) Student 2: *“kemampuan reading saya tentu semakin meningkat dengan sering berlatih karya sastra berbahasa Inggris”.*

(my reading skill is getting improved by reading literature in English).

- c) Student 3: "*kalau reading meningkat juga sih rasanya*"  
(I think my reading skill also improved).
- d) Student 4: "*Iya kak. Kan soalnya dinda baca terus, melatih dan mengulang-ulang. Jadi tahu gimana cara membacanya kak.*"  
(Yes, my reading skill improve, because I always read and do exercise. Therefore, I know how to read it).
- e) Student 5: "*jujur kemampuan reading Rani ada meningkat juga tapi lebih terasa meningkatnya itu di kemampuan speaking sih*"  
(honestly, my reading skill improve, even though my speaking skill is more improve).

Based on the statement above, students felt their skill in reading has better improvement. It shows that learning literary text in English could drill students' reading ability. For example, when they studied short story, there were some comprehensive questions. They asked to answer those question. It means they should have good comprehension related to the text in order to know what the meaning of the short story was. Therefore, they could understand the poetry and answer all the question.

Third, the students listening skill also improved. It is proved by students' statement. The following are students' claim related to improvement:

- a) Student 2: "*kemampuan listening saya cukup meningkat*".  
(my listening skill is quite improved).
- b) Student 5: "*kalau listening lebih meningkat*".  
(my listening skill is more improved).
- c) Student 1: "*Tapi kalau listening kurang meningkat*".  
(but my listening skill is not really improved).
- d) Student 3: "*listening nya sedikit-sedikit sih meningkat rasanya.*"  
(my listening skill improved slowly).
- e) Student 4: "*Bisa aja sih kak. Kalau dinda rajin dengerin lagu.*"  
(My listening skill could be improved, if I always listen to the music).

Based on those claims, it can be concluded that students' listening skill is better by learning literature in English. Some of them explained that he could improve his listening skill because of his hobby in listen to the song. Therefore, while they were in listening test in school, they could get ease in understanding what speaker said. Not only good at listening test, but also doing conversation with friends, family and teacher. In other words, by having better listening skill they could improve their ability in doing conversation with others in English.

Fourth, the students agreed that their writing skill improved by learning literature in English. The following are students' claim related to improvement:

- a) Student 1: "*kalau writing iya meningkat*" (my writing skill improved).
- b) Student 2: "*kemampuan writing saya cukup baik*". (my writing skill is quite good).
- c) Student 4: "*Bisa aja sih kak.*" (my writing skill could be improved).

Furthermore, 86% the students who could get many moral values from reading literature in English. It shows that they have good comprehension in getting message from the story. Therefore, most of the students more respect to teacher and parent after reading and analyzing literary text, especially poetry. It also shows that literature has big role in students' behavior to their environment. The following are students' claim related to moral values in literary text:

- a) Student 3: *"kalau angsa itu Kurasa aku bisa memetik itu enggak boleh serakah"*  
(about The Goose story, I think moral value is not good for being greedy).
- b) Student 1: *"pemahaman saya misalnya kita ada memberi tahu tiga orang untuk menjaga rahasia, tiga orang tersebut bisa saja menyimpan rahasia jika dua orang dari ketiga tersebut meninggal"*  
(my understanding through the proverb: If we give a secret to three people, all of them can keep it when two of them are died).
- c) student 3: *"karena pas di artiin ee puisi ayah ibu itu kayak ee menyentuh gitu."*  
(when teacher explained the implied meaning of the poetry which is about parents, I am touched".
- d) Student 5: *"Peran perannya sih mungkin ada sedikit, apalagi bagian puisi. Kan dulu sempat bikin puisi yang tentang orang tua, trus rani jadi keinget tentang orang tua gitu, trus juga yang tentang guru yang bilang guru itu kayak ngasih kita yang baik-baik, jadi rani lebih peka"*  
(I only get a bit of moral value from the poetry. I created a poetry about parents. It made me remember to my parents and also my teachers. For instance, teacher who teaches us. Therefore, I become more perceptive).

Based on the statement above, students become more polite and respect to their environment, both teachers and parents. Reading literary text, short story and poetry, could help them to be have better behavior. For instance, after reading short story, student got the value that as a human is not supposed to be greedy. She could implement the value to her surrounding, for example, she donated some money to orphans; she was more grateful to God. These are very good for her phycological development. Moreover, most of them claimed that poetry which were difficult for them could change their attitude toward their teacher. After they analyze the poetry about teacher, they claimed that they became more aware to the teacher; they realize that teacher is the hero who always teaches the good things.

Lastly, 77% of the students believed that literature in English can motivate their willingness in learning English. They believe that literature in English can help them in future because the importance of English language. Therefore, they needed to learn it. The following are students' claim about willingness to learn English:

- a) Student 1: *"sangat memotivasi"*

(learning literature in English motivates me to study English language).

- b) Student 1: *“karena kembali lagi ke pertanyaan pertama. Belajar Bahasa Inggris itu sangat penting. Jadi wajib untuk kita pelajari.”*  
(back to the first question, I am motivated to learning English because English is very important. So, we need to learn it).
- c) Student 3: *“lebih banyak adanya kak. soalnya pas belajar sana aku mikir Oh ternyata lumayan asyik juga ya.”*  
(my intention to learn English language is higher. Because studying literature is quite enjoyable).
- d) Student 5: *“Karena dalam sastra inggris itu, mereka pas ngomong gitu kayak keren, trus lebih lantang gitu ngomongnya, rani suka untuk part yang seperti itu”.*  
(because in literature in English, people speak impressively. I like the way they are).
- e) Student 4: *“bisa aja sih kak kalau ada niat.”*  
(It could be happened if I have intention).

Based on statement above, students are motivated to learn English because of learning literature in English. Most of them were interested in English language because of the importance of it which is one of international languages. They believed that by having good proficiency in English, they could be success students in the future. Even though one student unsure whether literature in English could motivate her willingness in learning English.

## 2. Discussion

There are several advantages of studying literature. First, students got new vocabularies when reading literary text. In other words, literature helped to improve students' language skill. This is supported by Floris, 2004; Baba, 2008; Elklic et al, 2011; Khatib et al, 2011; Yeasmin, 2011; Ketema, 2012; Othman, 2015; Ghazali, 2016. Bloemert, Jansen & van de Grift, 2019. When students studied literary text, they would find many new words. Then, they liked to translate those words by using google-translate tool. In this case, students would remember what the meaning of the words were. This finding also supports Lazar's (1993) argument that literature may provide meaning and memorable context for processing and interpreting new languages. In line with Collie and Slater (1987) claim that literature provides a valuable context in which individual lexical or syntactical items are made more memorable.

Second, literature in English improves their basic language skills. Collie and Slater (1987) mentioned that a student working with literature is helped with basic skill of languages. All these ways, the students had improvement in speaking skill. This is supported by the previous research such as Yeasmin, Azad & Ferdoush, 2011; Ketema, 2012; Yilmaz, 2012; Vural, 2013. This improvement gave positive impact toward students' daily life. For instance, they could do conversation with friends and family in English. In short, they are become more active to master and use of their ability. It is strengthened by Collie and Slater (1987) claim that at



productive level, students of literature will more creative and adventurous to begin to appreciate their skill by trying to master and begin to use some of their potential.

Students' writing skill also improved by leaning literature. This is strengthened by previous research, such as Yeasmin, Azad & Ferdoush, 2011; Ketema, 2012; Yilmaz, 2012; Vural, 2013; Adam & Babiker, 2015; Othman, 2015. This finding also supports Collie and Slater (1987) also argument that reading literary works, student gain familiarity with many features of written language-variety of possible structure, the different ways of connecting ideas-which help and enrich their own writing skill.

Students also got improvement in reading skill as the advantages of leaning literature. This is supported by the previous research such as Van, 2009; Yeasmin, Azad & Ferdoush, 2011; Ketema, 2012; Yilmaz, 2012; Vural, 2013; Othman, 2015. In contrary, Rahmi (2014) found in her study that more than half of the sample were doubt whether learning literature could improve their reading comprehension.

Lastly, the students could improve their listening skill. This supported by the previous research such as Yeasmin, Azad & Ferdoush, 2011; Vural, 2013. The students could improve listening skill because while studying literature in English, students used to English sentences. In short, students used to listen pronunciation and read English sentences. Therefore, when there was audio in English, they could understand. In contrary, Yilmaz (2012) found that most of his sample could not improve their listening skill.

Third, the students could get moral value from the literary text read and listened. Lazar (1993) argued that literary text has general educational value. While reading, studying and listening the literary works, student could get moral value which useful for their life. This is supported with the previous research, there were Othman, 2015; Alfauzan, & Hussain, 2017. Moreover, the students learned literary works could behave properly to older people, parents and teachers. This finding supports Lazar (1993) arguments that learning literature may educate person to stimulate imagination, develop critical thinking and increase emotional awarnes.

Fourth, the students are motivated to learn English language because they feel English is important for their future, Al-Tamimi & Shuib, 2009; Alkaff, 2013; Vural, 2013; Benediktsdóttir, 2016; Alfauzan, & Hussain, 2017; Zulfikar, Dahliana, and Sari, 2019. Students thought that proficiency in English can help them be success in the next journey. In contrary, there are some research showed that students have negative attitude toward English language, Al-Zahrani, 2008; Al-Tamimi, & Shuib, 2009.

#### **D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

Based on the result of the data analysis and discussion explained, it can be concluded that senior high school students' have positive attitude toward literature in English. All these ways, students got several advantages in learning literature. There are encouraging language sources, improving language skill, expanding students' awareness through environment and willingness to learn English language. Based on the result of the data analysis and discussion explained, there were some suggestions for students, teacher and other researcher. First, students need to realize the advantages of literature not only for personal but also for the

environment. Then, they need to read more literary text in various aspect. Second, teacher should clarify the ambiguity of students preferred in studying literary works which are interesting. Even though, they still lack of explanation what they meant by interesting. They might categorize interesting literary works if it relevant with their personality, feeling and culture; if they understood toward the plot or underlying meaning in in the text. Third, other researcher may do research related to students' attitude toward literature in English in other aspect. For instance, students preferred in teaching style.

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