



## Islamic High School Students' Attitude toward Literature in English; A Descriptive Study at MAN 1 Kota Bukittinggi

**Kharisma Khairunnisa<sup>1</sup>, Delvi Wahyuni<sup>2</sup>**

English Department, Faculty of Language and Arts, Universitas Negeri Padang<sup>1</sup>

English Department, Faculty of Language and Arts, Universitas Negeri Padang<sup>2</sup>

Correspondence Email : [kharisma.khairunnisaa@gmail.com](mailto:kharisma.khairunnisaa@gmail.com) [luckydelvi@gmail.com](mailto:luckydelvi@gmail.com)

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### Abstract

Curriculum 2013 created some changes in the regulations and methods used during the learning process. One of which is the existence of elective classes in the Senior High School level, including English elective class. This class aimed to allow the students to learn other subjects outside their compulsory subject, based on their interest and passion. This regulation also existed in Islamic High schools. There are more compulsory subjects in this school rather than in the regular school. Therefore, this study aimed to explore Islamic Senior High School students' attitudes toward literature in English. The participants of this research were 24 students of twelve-grade in the science specialization class of MAN 1 Kota Bukittinggi. The sample was chosen using the purposive sampling technique. The criterion for choosing the sample was the students who took English in an elective class. This study employed descriptive research. The instrumentations of this research were questionnaire as the primary and interview as the secondary to get deeper information. There were several categories asked the students, which were students' favorite genre of literature, advantages of literature, language preference in the classroom, and also the influence of numerous subjects in Islamic high school. Overall, the result of this research showed that students of Islamic Senior High School have positive attitude toward literature in English.

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## INTRODUCTION

The latest learning curriculum applied in Indonesia is Curriculum 2013. This curriculum is the modification of the previous curriculum: School-Based Curriculum 2006 (*KTSP 2006*). There are significant changes in the regulations and the methods used in the learning process due to the existence of this curriculum. One of those is students may choose to learn other subjects outside of their compulsory subject in elective class (*Kelas Peminatan*) in the Senior High School level (Hakim, 2017). This

class aimed to give the opportunity for the students to develop their knowledge competencies, attitudes and skills based on their own interests, passions, and abilities in certain scientific subjects. One of the classes is the English Elective class. In English elective class, students are introduced to the literature in English, which in the Indonesian context has not been specifically taught for a long time to the students of High School level (Puadi Ilyas, 2016). The goal of teaching English literature is to gain students' ability in comprehending the contextual meaning of the social functions, structures, and also language features of the texts (Kemendikbud, 2013).

Curriculum 2013 has also been implemented in Islamic Senior High School (*Madrasah Aliyah/MA*). Here, there are more compulsory subjects that must be learned by the students rather than in regular high school (Mahdalena, 2017). This is because Islamic Senior High School is under the auspices of the Minister of Religion and it has to contain Islamic characteristics, one of which is the Islamic subjects (Permenag Nomor 60, 2016). Besides learning compulsory subjects like those in the regular high schools, the students of Islamic High School also have to study Arabic, Aqidah and Akhlak, Islamic History, Fiqh, and many more that cannot be found outside of Islamic schools (Sabda, Islam, Antasari, & Indonseia, 2019). However, there is integration between religious and intellectual values. Because of that, Islamic Senior High School does not only offers religious maturity, but also intellectual capacity (Alawiyah, 2014).

The exposure to the English language in Islamic High School, which in this context is MA, is much lower rather than in Islamic boarding school. Islamic boarding school obliged the students to stay in the dormitory, and they are exposed to the use of language in daily life in both school and dormitory environments (Nurjaman & Sahida, n.d.). While at Islamic High School, English is only used as a subject and an option in elective classes, some schools use English as a supporting or extracurricular activity. This shows the lack of engagement between Islamic High School students with the English language environment. In fact, some experts argue that the environment is very influential on student achievement, especially in learning foreign languages. According to Dulay as cited in (Baroto, 2017) the environment is a crucial factor in language acquisition. If the students are exposed to an environment with a very limited exposure of the second language, of course the learning process will run ineffectively.

In addition to the environment, there are other things that can also affect students' achievement in learning, one of which is attitude. As stated by Fakeye (2010), students' attitudes are considered as one of the most influencing factors that affect the students' learning process. It helps students dealing with challenges, overcoming obstacles, and accomplishing their learning goals (Prastiwi, n.d.). Students with positive learning attitudes are happier and more actively engage in the learning process. While students with negative learning attitudes may feel anxious in learning, for example, they would easily get bored and hard to enjoy the learning process (Zulfikar, Dahliana, & Sari, 2019). Similarly, students' attitudes can be used as a consideration of the success in the teaching and learning process in Islamic Senior High School. For this case, the study about Islamic students' attitude toward literature in English is viewed as important for making the learning process valuable, and to raise the efficiency of the students in language learning class (Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011).

A large number of studies on literature in English with various dimensions have been conducted over the years across the world. First, a study conducted discussed literature teaching by (Dickfors, 2015), (Floris, 2004), and (Novianti, 2016). Next, some scholars specifically discuss attitudes towards literature in English from both teachers' and students' points of view, for example (Iheanacho, 2013), (Karakaya & Kahraman, 2013), (Khaoula, 2017) and (Afdian & Wahyuni, 2020). In regards to Islamic students' attitude towards English, there were research done by (Faizah & Jaliyya, 2017) and (Ratnadewi, Utami, & Yunianti, 2020)

However, the specific study about Islamic High School students' attitude toward literature in English considers being under research, especially in Indonesia. Whereas, the attitude is very important, not only for regular students but also for Islamic students, in order to identify their opinion of the learning process, analyze their needs and wants, and as an improvement for the weaknesses of the instruction in learning. Theoretically, this study expected to fill in the gap of the previous studies related to this topic. Moreover, it would enrich the understanding of English literature learning. Moreover, it would give the profitable description and useful reference for any further researchers who want to study the same case. Practically, this research is expected to improve teachers' awareness to fit appropriate learning activities based on the students' needs and wants, so it will be encouraged their positive attitude toward English in general, and literature in English in particular.

Generally, attitude defines as how people feel, and view an object. As stated by (Eshghinejad, 2020) that attitude is feeling and opinion that everyone has about something. (Mensah & Dei Mensah, 2013) also describes that attitude as a concept that focuses on how an individual thinks, acts, and behaves. Furthermore, Eagly and Chaiken (1993, as quoted in (Haddock & Maio, n.d.)) argue that individual's preference to be liked or disliked an object is also considered as the attitude. While (Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011) explains that attitude is a relatively enduring organization of beliefs around an object or a situation, predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner. Because attitude is relatively enduring, it means that attitude can be learned and taught. According to (Baker, 1988), as cited in (Iheanacho, 2013) since attitude is learned, it obvious that it is not inherited. Moreover, attitude cannot be inherited, but it can be learned and changed, since it is based on personal experience (Prastiwi, n.d.)

Attitude consists of three components; affective, behavioral, and cognitive (Eagly and Chiaken, 1993). Affective is an emotional response that expresses an individual's degree of preference between favorable and unfavorable. Next, behavioral intention refers to an individual's tendencies (verbal or non- verbal) to behave in a particular way toward an object. The behavioral component is also familiar with conative aspects. This aspect determines the individual's consistent, inclinations and intentions towards the attitude object. Cognition refers to the cognitive evaluation of the entity that constitutes an individual's belief about something. It is characterized by the beliefs that an individual has about an object or phenomenon.

Attitude is important not only for regular school students, but also for Islamic High School students. According to (Daulay & Tobroni, 2017) Islamic education in Indonesia has been started since the introduction of Islam by the broadcaster of Islamic

preachers. This kind of informal education then led to the initial recognition of Islamic education in non-formal centers such as mosques. Once the needs for education increase among the Muslim community, formal Islamic education begins to appear, one of which is Madrasah (Islamic School).

Madrasah is like a regular school but they have Islamic characteristics. Madrasah includes formal education which implementation is managed by the Ministry of Religion, but the curriculum is integrated with the National Education Curriculum. This means that madrasah uses the school curriculum in addition to the Islamic religious knowledge curriculum. (Daulay & Tobroni, 2017) claims that like regular school, madrasah has three levels of education, which are *ibtidaiyah* which is at the same level as primary school, *tsanawiyah* is at the same level as Junior High School, and *aliyah* the higher level of madrasah that in the same level with Senior High School.

This kind of Islamic School continues to run and has its opportunities and challenges. The opportunities include; the increasingly widespread life of religious people, the stronger the Ministry of Religion in managing madrasa education, better public interest in the implementation of madrasa education, and wider community support. Moreover, the challenges of Islamic education are; the development of science and technology, bureaucracy, technology, partnerships, curriculum demands, and funding. However, madrasahs already have an important role and position for the implementation of education to print the nation's generation in the future (Alawiyah, 2014)

## RESEARCH METHOD

This was descriptive research with qualitative approach. The goal of descriptive research is to get a comprehensive summarization of specific events experienced by individual or groups of individuals (Lambert & Lambert, 2013) The data of this research would be described in percentage which strengthened by interview.

Population of this study was 138 students in Twelfth grade in MAN 1 Kota Bukittinggi which were in science specialization class. In this study, the researcher would use the purposive sampling technique in deciding the sample. The criteria for the sample is the students who took English in an elective class. There are two instruments used, questionnaire as the primary instrumentation and interview as secondary instrumentation. The questionnaire was adopted from (Afdian & Wahyuni, 2020). Then, the data will be percentage to find out the Islamic students' attitude towards literature in English

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### *Research Finding (tentative)*

The data were classified into favorite genre of literature, advantages of learning literature, language used in literature class, and also the influence of many lesson in Islamic high school. The data were calculated to find out percentage of students' attitude toward each aspect of learning literature.

### *Students' Attitude toward Genre of Literature*

The table below showed that short stories were the most favorite genre of literature chosen by the students of Islamic Senior High School. Meanwhile, least of the students like to read novels.

**Table 1.** Students' attitude toward genre of literature

No.	Statement	%
9.	I like to read poetry	38
10.	I like to read short stories	67
11.	I like to read short novels	22

The researcher got the reasons why students do not like to read novels compare to short stories.

*Student 1: Saya paling suka short story kak, kalo novel sih ga ada di bahas di sekolah kak, tapi kalo iya ga sanggup rasanya kak, panjang kali hehe.*

(I like short story the most, novel was not specifically discussed at school, I think I can't, because the text is so long hehe.

*Student 3: Short story kak, atau story telling gitu karena sering dibahas, kalo novel engga kak..*

(I like short story or story telling because it's often discussed, but not with novel).

*Student 4: Saya lebih suka short story sih kak, karena penggunaan bahasanya simple alur ceritanya singkat, sehingga lebih mudah dipahami. Ee kalo novel saya kurang suka sih kak, karena alurnya lebih panjang dan penggunaan bahasanya rumit kak hehe, jadi susah mengertinya kak.*

(I prefer short stories because the language used is simple, the plot is short, so it's easier to understand. I don't like novel because the plot is longer and the use of language is complicated, so it's hard to understand)

*Student 5: Menurut saya novel terlalu panjang kak, ber-bab bab gitu kan, udah malas duluan jadinya kak, hehehe. Kalau cerpen relative lebih pendek, jadi saya gampang membacanya kak.*

(In my opinion, the novel is too long (the text), also consists of some chapters, it made me uninterested, hehehe. The short story is relatively shorter, so it's easier for me to read it)

The statements above showed that there were three reasons why students did not like reading novels compare to short stories. First, novels contain non-familiar vocabularies. Therefore, the students were hard to get the idea of the text that they read. Second, the students did not like novel compare to short story due to the length of the texts. Novel consists of some chapters that made the students become uninterested to finish their reading. Third, the plot in novel is more complicated rather than in short story which is quite simple.

Excluding the statements provided in the questionnaire, the researcher found out other genre of literature which most of the students like.

Student 1: *Puisi engga kak, lebih ke song gitu sih kak sukanya.*  
(I don't like poetry, I prefer song).

Student 2: *Suka lagu kak, karena dari sana banyak dapat kosa kata baru kak.*  
(I like song, because I can get a lot of new vocabularies from there).

Student 3: *yang paling suka ya story telling sama song kak*  
(What I like the most is short story and song)

Student 4: *Saya paling suka sih song sih kak, karena hmm lagu emang dekat dengan kehidupan sehari-hari, hampir tiap hari dengerin lagu. Dan juga ee liriknya sering relate gitu kak hehe.*

(I like song the most, because, hmm, songs are really close to everyday life, I listen to songs almost every day. And also, the lyrics are often relatable).

Student 5: *Menurut saya lagu itu enak di dengar kak, jadi ngga ngebosnin kalo lagi belajar bahasa Inggris lewat lagu.*

(I think song is good to listen to, so it won't be boring to learn English through songs).

Based on the statements above, others genre of literature that most of the students like was song. The reason they loved to learn song is because song and music were really close to teenager life nowadays. They claimed that song sometimes contains related meaning to their feeling or emotion. Second, they thought that the vocabulary used in song is much familiar rather than in other genres of literature. Last but not least, they thought that song is fun and they can enjoy learning while singing or listening to the song.

#### *Advantages of Learning Literature*

The table above showed that most of the students viewed literature in English was beneficial.

**Table 2.** Advantages of Learning Literature

No.	Statement	%
7.	I think I improve my proficiency in the English language	92
14.	Many moral values can be learned through reading literature	100
15.	Literature can motivate my interest in learning the English language	96
16.	I learn many new words when I read literary text	100

Obviously, 100% of the students agreed by learning literature in English they can get many moral values as well as enrich their vocabulary by learning many new words. Next, 96% of the students believed that literature in English could motivate their interest to learn English in general. Then, 92% of the students claimed that literature in English helped them to improve their proficiency in English language. Regarding to proficiency in English, the researcher asked them about which of the skills in English that improved after learning literature in English.

Student 1: *Menambah kosa kata yang sulit-sulit gitu kak, dulu rasanya sangat kurang, tapi setelah belajar sastra Inggris banyak bertambah kak.*

(Increase some difficult vocabularies, previously my vocabularies were very low, but after learning literature in English I got improvement).

*Student 2: Yang meningkat, hmm vocabulary sih kak, sama writing juga.*  
(I got improvement in vocabulary and writing)

*Student 3: Hmm kalo Nabila dalam bidang speaking sih kak.*  
(Hmm I got improvement in speaking).

*Student 4: Reading and listening sih kak*  
(Reading and listening)

*Student 5: menurut saya ee yang meningkat itu lebih ke vocabulary kak.*  
(In my opinion, ee I got improvement in vocabulary).

From the statement above, it can be seen that there are some improvements on students' skill. Students believed that they got vocabulary improvement. Moreover, their speaking, writing, listening and reading were also improved.

*Language used during the lesson*

**Table 3.** Language used during the lesson

No.	Statement	%
5.	I think that teachers can use some Indonesian language in explaining literary content	92
6.	I think that teachers should allow students to use some Indonesian language to explain their understanding of the literary text read.	88

Table 3 showed students preference of the language used during the class. Most of the students (92%) agreed with the fifth statement. They believed that teachers could use some Indonesian language in explaining the literary content. In addition, most of them agreed that teachers should allow them to use some Indonesian language to explain their understanding of the literary text read (88%).

*Student 1: Kadang ibunya ngomong kayak sama Inggris kak, terlalu cepat. Mau nya di gabung dipelankan terus gabung sama bahasa Indonesia dikit-dikit kak.*

(Sometimes, the teacher talks like to the native speaker, too fast. I want the teacher to slow down the speech, and intersperse with Indonesian language)

*Student 4: hmm kalo menurut saya sih kak gapapa guru pakai bahasa inggris, tapi sebaiknya tetap pakai Bahasa Indonesia, diselingi gitu kak, biar gampang memahami pelajaran*

(hmm, in my opinion, it's okay if the teacher uses English, but she should still use some of Indonesian language, like interspersed with that, so it's easy to understand the lesson)

*Student 5: kalo penggunaan bahasa kayanya aku lebih bisa mengerti kalau pakai bahasa Indonesia juga dikit-dikit kak... iya kak, baik siswa maupun ibunya kak.*

(For the language use, I think I could more understand if using a little bit of Indonesian language... yes, for both students and teachers)

From the statement above, it can be seen that the students would be more understand the literature contents if the teachers used some of their mother tongue in explaining the lesson. They also wanted the teacher to slow down the speech when teaching the literature. In addition, they would be enjoyed the lesson if the teacher allowed them to use some of Indonesian language too when they asked to answer or explain their task in the classroom.

*The Influence of numerous subject toward students' attitude*

There was no statement available in the questionnaire about the effect of other subjects, especially religious subjects, in Islamic high school students' attitude toward literature in English. This topic was gotten by the researcher during the interview. It could be informed that numerous lessons in Islamic High School were not affect students' attitude toward learning literature in English. The following are students' explanation to strengthen this data.

*Student 1: Engga kak, karena saya berpikir setiap pelajaran punya daya tariknya tersendiri kak... ada motivasi tertentu disetiap mata pelajaran kak.*

No, because I think every lesson has its own fascination,. . there is a certain motivation in each subject, Sis.

*Student 2: Ga ada pengaruhnya kak, menurut saya kalau bisa membagi focus ya aman-aman saja kak.*

There is no influence, in my opinion it will be okay, if we can split our focus.

*Student 3: Engga mempengaruhi kak, karena udah biasa kak.*

It doesn't affect me at all, because I get used to this condition.

*Student 4: Menurut saya tidak ada pengaruhnya kak, justru ini bisa membantu saya untuk masa depan kak, misalnya kalau mau sekolah keluar negeri Bahasa Inggris pasti penting kan kak.*

I don't think it has any effect, Sis, this can actually help me for the future, for example, if you want to study abroad, English is definitely important, right, Sis.

*Student 5: Kalau soal belajarnya ga ada pengaruh sih kak, tapi kalo tugas nya banyak mungkin jadi sedikit memberatkan saja kak.*

When it comes to studying, it doesn't matter, but if I have a lot of assignments, it might just be a little exhausting, Sis.

Based on the statement above, generally students claimed that other lessons were not influenced their attitudes toward literature in English. It is because they believed each subject has its own characteristic which differs to other subjects. They believed that literature in English has its own interesting point which they could not get from other subjects. Moreover, students also argue that English is important for their future, one of which is learning abroad. One thing that they considered is the amount of the task that should be done by them along with other subjects.



### ***Discussion***

Based on the overall result from the data analysis and findings above, it could be seen that Islamic Senior High School students' attitude toward literature in English is positive. This study is relevant with other previous researches such as Faizah & Jaliyya, 2017; Ratnadewi et al., 2020. It is also similar with the research done in regular senior high school related to students' attitude toward literature in English by Afdian & Wahyuni, 2020; Gajalakshmi, 2013.

Islamic Senior High school students' awareness of the importance of English is one of the factors that underline them to have a positive attitude toward English literature. In addition, students' awareness of the benefits gained by learning English is also a determining factor for their attitude. Students recognize that studying English literature can improve their various skills in English. Furthermore, although there are many subjects that must be studied in this school that integrate religious knowledge and general science, this did not hinder the interest and enthusiasm of the students to study English in general, and English literature in particular.

Another statement that could be highlighted is song was the most favorite text among others genre of literature. This is because song is a fun and enjoyable learning media. This statement supported by Sharpe (2001) as cited in (Ranggen, 2016). He claims that song could create a fun and enjoyable environment in learning process. This situation of learning then triggered the students to be more enthusiastic in learning. Schoepp (2001) as cited in (Ranggen, 2016) also argue that enjoyable activity contributes to a supportive, non-threatening learning setting with active and confident learners. This non-threatening environment makes the student relax and able to learn foreign language without any pressure or anxiety.

Meanwhile, novel was the least genre of literature chosen by the students. They thought that novel have a long text, as the result they could not get the plot of the story and could not understand the storylines. This study was supported by the previous research conducted by (Ghazali, Setia, Muthusamy, & Jusoff, 2009).

Next, literature is beneficial in students' academic and daily life. First, literature could give an advantage in term of students' vocabulary enrichment. This is because students are exposed to unfamiliar vocabularies during learning literature in English (Puadi Ilyas, 2016). Usually, students tend to look for those unfamiliar vocabularies meaning in dictionary or others translation tools when they read literary text. Then, they try to remember those words for interpreting the next texts. This finding supported by Lazar's (1993) as cited in (Afdian & Wahyuni, 2020).

Second, students can get many moral values by reading literary texts. It will help them to become a better individual in their life. This is relevant with some previous studies, such as Othman, 2015; Alfauzan & Huassain, 2017. Learning literature is believed could increase students' emotional awareness (Lazar, 1993). Therefore, students tend to behave properly to people around them. Other benefit of literature in English is the raising of students' motivation in learning English generally. Students believed learning English could help them in their future life. In the other word, by learning literature in English, could stimulus students' positive attitudes toward English language learning in general.

At the end, students could improve their proficiency in English. This is characterized by the increasing of basic language skills of the students (Collie and Slater, 1987). First, literature could improve students' listening skill. Exposing the students to English songs is one of effective ways to make the students aware to the sounds of words in English. Moreover, the rhyming words and such poetic device in song give the valuable ear-training for the learner (Ward, 1980 as cited in Ranggen, 2016 ) This way, gives an opportunity to conduct the learning process in a more fun way. Second, literature could improve students' speaking skill. The activity of literary works such as drama, help the students to practice their ability on speaking in more enjoyable and communicative way. Beside have to master their part of dialogues, the students also get motivation to be confident to talk in front of their friends as it is in real life. Moreover, drama is done by the students in form of group or team work. It will less the tension to practice their speaking during the learning process (Dinarty, F., Sutapa, Y. G., & Bunau, 2018). Additionally, literature also improves students reading and writing skills. Not only get many moral values of the literary text, the students are also exposed to the generic structure of the text. They are accustomed to read it particularly, as well as practice their writing skill.

In term of learning process, the students hope that teachers could use some of Indonesian language, which is their mother tongue, to explain the literary elements. The students sometimes could not understand teachers' instruction or explanation when explaining the lesson. As the result, they could not reach the goal of learning. The students also hope that they are allowed to use some of their mother tongue in answering or explaining their task in front of the class. This study supported by (Yadav, 2014). He claimed that the judicious use of mother tongue is advantageous in foreign language classroom. He claimed that teachers could use mother tongue under some circumstances, or in simply when it is really necessary.

Additionally, in regard to the components of attitude, students' positive attitude should be consisted of the three components positive at the same time. First, the affective component, it involves students' feeling and emotion toward the literary works. The affective component remarked by students' tendencies toward literature in English. From the data above, most of the students like to learn literature in English, especially when it is about short story and song. Second, the cognitive component, it is about students' belief or knowledge about literature in English. This component showed by students' believed that literature in English is beneficial for their academic or daily life. Moreover, the students believed that learning literature in English is necessary and important. Third, students' attitude viewed in the term of behavioral component. This component of attitude influences how students react or behave toward literature in English. From the data gotten from the questionnaire and the interview, it can be seen that students are enjoy and interested in learning literature in English. It means that students also have positive attitude in term of behavioral component.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis, findings, and discussion above, it can be concluded that the students of Islamic Senior High School have positive attitude toward literature

in English. This is because the students had already have awareness about the importance of learning English. Then, the students believed that learning literature is one of a fun ways to learn English. They also believed that literature in English is beneficial for their life, both for daily and academically.

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