



Rural High School Students' Attitude toward Literature in English: A Descriptive Study at SMA N 1 Batipuh

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Article History

Submitted: 2021-10-26

Accepted: YYYY-MM-DD

Published: YYYY-MM-DD

Abstract

The new regulation in curriculum 2013 required senior high schools students to choose a compulsory subject that is generally known as elective course. One of all compulsory subjects in elective course is English elective class. Elective course are also implemented in every senior high schools in Indonesia including rural senior high schools. There are some obstacles to learning English in rural areas. Hence, the researcher is interested to research rural Senior High School students' attitudes toward literature in English. This study was descriptive qualitative research. The participants of this research were 22 eleventh grade students as representative of Social Science class in second grade in SMA N 1 Batipuh. The instrumentations of this research are collected from questionnaire and interview. As for the points to the students, namely the favourite genre of literature, benefits of learning literature, topic preferences, the use of language in classroom, and also the learning obstacles in rural senior high school. This findings of this research showed that rural students have positive attitude towards literature in English.

Keywords:

Elective Course, Attitude, Rural, Literature in English.

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How to Cite: Damuri, D and Wahyuni, D. (2021). Rural High School Students' Attitude toward Literature in English: A Descriptive Study at SMA N 1 Batipuh. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, 10. (4): pp. 566-577, DOI: [10.24036/jelt.v10i4.114763](https://doi.org/10.24036/jelt.v10i4.114763)

INTRODUCTION

In 2013, the Ministry of Education inaugurated the 2013 Curriculum. In line with a new curriculum, there is new regulation especially in the subject taught in schools. The new regulation in curriculum 2013 required students to choose a supplementary subject. Students are given freedom in determining and choosing selection of the subject that is generally known as an elective course (*lintas minat*). According to the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture (2014), elective course in SMA / MA aims to provide opportunities for students to develop knowledge competence, attitude, and skill which have been owned by students according to their interests in a group of scientific subjects. In an English elective course, students are introduced to literature in English.

In regards to the study of literature in English Language Teaching (ELT), some studies argue that learning literature has advantages for students (Mainland, 2013; Murat, 2005; McKay, 1982; Collie and Slater, 2006). First, learning literature encourages students to participate actively and individually. Second, learning literature can help the development of self-motivation with the sensitivity of the surrounding environment. Third, learning literature can help students become creative and more aware readers. Fourth, literature presents a full and colorful setting. Because of these advantages, literature is being taught in the Curriculum 2013.

The regulations of Curriculum 2013 are also implemented in every region in Indonesia including senior high schools in rural areas. There are some obstacles to learning English in rural areas. First, rural schools do not have sufficient facilities to provide knowledge about English (Setianengsih et al., 2017; Dean and Behne, 2002). Second, the family background becomes the major factor in determining the academic performance of learners such as low socioeconomic (Adell, 2002; Rani, 2014). Third, the contents of textbooks in rural schools do not match with the environmental issues (Michelle et al., 2010). Because of the factors, students in rural areas will be lower knowledge of English compared to students in urban areas (Hossain, 2016; Wigati, 2019; Group, 2016; Short & Martin, 2005).

The geographical background is not only the main factor that can influence the learning process but also students' attitude (Hashwani, 2008; Bakar et al, 2010; Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011). In addition, Oroujlou & Vahedi, (2011) stated that positive attitudes serve a better comprehension of the nature of learning for the learners, it also makes the students more open to learning. On the other hand, negative attitudes towards a language can get low expectations from the learning process, increase anxiety levels, and also increase the difficulty of learning (Al & Ibnian, 2015). However, students' attitude plays a major role in achieving the goals of the teaching and learning process. Therefore, an investigation about rural students' attitudes toward literature in English is useful for making the learning process meaningful, contextualized and easy for students to acquire the ability of English skill by using literature (Karakaya, 2013).

There have been a large number of studies on literature in English. The first study was conducted by Choudhary (2016), Al-mahrooqi (2015), and Ghazali (2009). To get deep information about the topic of this research, some studies discuss attitudes towards literature in English from both teachers' and students' points of view, such as (Karakaya & Kahraman, 2013), (Spirovska, 2016), and (Afdian & Wahyuni, 2020). In regards to rural students' attitudes towards English have been conducted by (Hussein, 2016), (Short & Martin, 2005) and (Wigati, 2019).

However, rural senior high school students' attitude towards literature in English is still small number investigated before especially in Indonesia. Attitude plays a big role in the learning process, not only for urban students but also for rural students the different obstacles in the learning process. This research can be used for identifying students' opinions of the learning process, analyzing students' needs towards literature and also as a reflection for getting the weaknesses over in learning literature. Theoretically, this research is expected will be useful for filling the gaps in a similar topic. Practically, this research can give a contribution to teaching literature for

teachers. This research can use appropriate learning activities which encourage positive attitude from rural students towards literature in English.

Attitude is a benchmark of a person in creating ideas, feelings and behaviors about a psychological object in a structured manner (Çetin, 2006). According to Oncul (2000) and Vossen et al., (2018), attitudes as individuals' behavior that same with other people, objects, and events is in tune with unchangeable feelings and beliefs. Moreover, an attitude is a set of beliefs that tend to be ingrained around an object or situation or a personal tendency to respond to something in a certain way (Ghazali, 2009; Oroujlou & Vahedi (2011). Attitude also can be defined as the personal response in facing up the condition outside or inside her or his self (Phillpot et al., n.d.). In line with that, Kalanda (2005) stated that an attitude can be defined as people's response that affects the behavior of human beings to specific things.

Kondrotienė, (2020) mentioned that attitude consists of three aspects that are cognitive, affective, and then conative. The cognitive aspect is the beliefs in a person's opinion about an object and situation (Bloom et al., 2009). The assessment is based on evaluative beliefs as measured by the scale are attitudes. The affective aspect refers to a person's feeling and emotion towards an object or situation (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). The assessment of the affective aspect involves a person's ability to receive, respond, apply, manage and live up to a stimulus in an appropriate way. The conative aspect refers to the person's consistent, inclinations and intentions towards the attitude object (Kondrotienė, (2020). . The conative tendency depends on how an individual responds to an object.

According to Tobias et al.,(2013) there are two types of attitude that consist positive and negative attitude. In addition Stark et al., (2013) stated that positive attitude will encourage students to like or accept the object. However, the negative attitude will encourage students to dislike, and decline the existence of an object. The attitudes will affect highly on how students approach every situation in life.

Socio geographical background can affect student learning outcomes, especially the concentration of students in receiving the learning that is being taught (Ismah et al., 2015). These can be seen from the learning outcomes of students in urban schools will be higher knowledge of English compared to students in rural (Hossain, 2016). According to (Surchev, 2010) rural areas have several characteristics. First, rural area has a small scale and poorly developed. Second, the development of infrastructure is still being carried out. Third, the rural economy focuses on agriculture sector. Other features classifying rural areas are: geographical position, natural environment, the number of population, the level of infrastructure development.

There are some different challenges faced by the teachers in rural schools (Endriyati et al., 2019). The problem of students learning English in rural areas is insufficient facilities (Setianengsih et al., 2017; Dean and Behne, 2002), the family background (Adell, 2002), the textbooks used in rural schools do not contain rural environment (Michelle et al., 2010). Setianengsih et al., (2017) explained that some reasons for the lack of opportunity in using English in students' daily lives in rural schools. First, the rural school got less of government attention, the rural students rarely explore English and rural students are unmotivated in the learning process.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study is a descriptive research with qualitative design. Descriptive research is scientific research that reports phenomena, reality and facts of the subject study (Gay, 2010). The purpose of this study is to gain the phenomenon of rural senior high school students' attitudes towards literature in English.

Population of this study is 144 students of Social Science class in second grade in SMA N 1 Batipuh. In this study, the researcher took students who have studied English elective course with purposive sampling technique. There are two instruments used, questionnaire as the primary instrumentation and interview as secondary instrumentation. The questionnaire is adopted from Afdian & Wahyuni (2020). Then, the data will be percentage to find out the rural students' attitude toward literature in English.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Finding (tentative)

The findings of this research were divided into students' attitudes toward genre of literature, students' preferred topic literature in English, the advantages of learning literature, and the language used during learning. The data were calculated to show the percentage calculation of the questionnaire result on rural senior high school student' attitude toward literature in English.

Students' Attitudes toward Genre of Literature

Table 1. Students' attitudes toward genre of literature

No.	Statements	%
9	I like to read poetry	37
10	I like to read short stories	76
11	I like to read novels	28

Table 1 showed that students prefer to read short stories than poetry and novels. Then, the percentage of students who like to read novels in English is the lowest. This shows that students do not like reading novels. During the interview, the researcher found out the reasons students did not like novels.

Students' statements on the novel are as follows:

Student 1: "Tidak suka kak karena novel terlalu banyak kata-kata sulitnya Kak."

(I don't like it because the novel has too many difficult words)

Student 2: "Karena novel itu terlalu panjang kak, jadi ga jelas ceritanya tentang apa kak."

(Because the novel is too long, it's not clear what the story is about).

Student 4: "Dari puisi, novel dan cerpen, yang paling tidak disukai sih novel kak."

(From poetry, novels and short stories, my least favorite is novels)

Student 1: "Kalo baca novel itu membosankan kak, tidak jelas alurnya kak."

(If reading novels is boring, the plot is not clear.)

Based on the students' statements above, it can be concluded that students do not like reading novels. This is supported by the reason that students do not like novels. The reason is that the novel is in the form of a long text, has a lot of vocabulary

so that it causes boredom in students. Therefore, students have difficulty in understanding the novel.

Students' preferred topic literature in English

Other genres of literature such as songs were not mentioned in the questionnaire. Even so, the preferred topic literature can be found during the interview. The students tend to prefer English songs. The following are student statements about the song:

Student 1: "*Kalau lagu mudah di mengerti kak*"

(If the song is easy to understand).

Student 2: "*Menurut saya lagu bahasa inggris menggunakan Kata-kata sederhana dan enak didengar*".

(I think English songs use simple words and are pleasant to hear)

Student 3: "*paling suka lagu kak, kita cukup menikmatinya*"

(I like your song the most, we really enjoy it)

Student 4: "*lagu itu mengikuti zaman kak jadi udah menyatu dengan kehidupan*"

(The song follows our time, so it's integrated with life).

Student 1: "Suka lagu yang romantise seperti "Here's your perfect sama "Happier kak"

(I like romantic song such as "Here's your perfect and Happier)

Student 2: "*Suka lagu yang bertema kehidupan remaja kak*"

(I like song about teenage life)

Student 3: "Suka dengar lagu " driver license " kak"

(I like driver license song"

Student 4: "Suka lagu cinta kak contohnya " Heartbreak anniversary."

(I like the love topic like " Herat break Anniversary)

Based on the above statement, song is another literary genre that students are most interested in. The reason students like songs is because songs have simple words so they are easy to understand. Second, students also claim that songs are related to human life so that their existence is close to students. Finally, students consider songs to be enjoyable so they are more interesting and fun to learn. Moreover, students prefer to listen to romantic and teenage life as their favorite songs.

The Advantages of Learning Literature

Table 2. The advantages of learning literature

No.	Statements	%
7.	I think I can improve my proficiency in the English language.	76
14.	Many moral values can be learned through reading literature.	90
15.	Literature can motivate my interest in learning the English language.	90
16.	I learn many new words when I read literary text.	80

The table above shows that the majority of students find literature in English useful. This is supported by the percentage of students agreeing with the statement of learning literature in their English language, can get a lot of moral values and enrich

vocabulary when studied. Furthermore, students assume that literature in English can motivate their interest in learning English. Then, 92% of students stated that literature in English helps them improve their English skills.

Regarding the ability to speak English, the researcher also asked about which English skills improved after studying literature in English. The following is an explanation from students regarding the skills:

Student 1: *“Menambah kosakata juga kak, dengan belajar sastra dalam bahasa inggris, saya jadi lebih banyak membaca sehingga dapat menambah kosakata tiap kali baca seperti cerpen ataupun puisi”*.

(Increasing vocabulary too, by studying literature in English, I read more so that I can increase vocabulary every time I read like short stories or poetry.)

Student 2: *“Lebih ke kosakatanya kak karena banyak bacaan sastra”*

(It's more about vocabulary, because I learn a lot of reading literary.)

Student 3: *“Kemampuan membacanya juga berbicaranya kak.”*

(The ability is in reading and also speaking.)

Student 4: *“Mendengarkan dan kosakatanya nambah kak”*

(Listening and increasing vocabulary)

Student 5: *“ Kalau saya lebih ke kosakatanya kak, juga menulis melalui pembelajaran cerpen”*

(This can enrich my vocabulary and also my writing skill through short story lesson.)

From the students' statements above, it can be concluded that students' skills in English have improved in several skills through learning literature in English. Students believe that studying literature can improve vocabulary. In addition, the students' speaking, writing, listening, and reading skills also improved.

The Language Used during Learning

Table 3. The language used during learning

No.	Statements	%
5.	I think that teachers can use some Indonesian language in explaining literary content.	95
6.	I think that teachers should allow students to use some Indonesian language to explain their understanding of the literary text read.	95

The table above showed that students' preferences for the language used during class. Students strongly agree with statements 5 and 6 that have the same percentages. Students stated teachers should use some Indonesian in explaining the contents of literature so that students can understand them better. In addition, some of the students also thought that students themselves were allowed to use a few words in Indonesian to explain students' understanding of the literary texts they read (95%). The following are student statements as follows:

Student 1: *“Terkadang guru di kelas menerangkan dengan bahasa inggris semuanya kak, jadi bingung kalo ada kata yang tidak dipahami.”*

Sebaiknya diselingi dengan bahasa indonesia agar lebih paham secara keseluruhan kak”

(Sometimes ,the teacher in the class explains everything in English, so it's confusing if there are words that I don't understand. It's better if it is interspersed with Indonesian so that you can understand it better)

Student 3:” *hmm bagi saya, kalau gurunya menyampaikan dengan 2 bahasa itu jadi lebih baik kak, jadi bagi yang tidak mengerti sama sekali, jadi tahu apa yang dibicarakan.*“

(Hhmm for me, if the teacher conveys in 2 languages, it will be better, so for those who don't understand at all, we know what we are talking about.)

Student 5:” *Penggunaan bahasa indonesia di kelas bahasa inggris itu bagus kak, soalnya kalo bahasa inggris terus jadi makin tidak mengerti maknanya, tapi sesekali dipakai juga bahasa indonesia jadi lebih paham kak”*

(The use of Indonesian in English class is good, because if you continue to speak English, you don't understand the meaning even more, but sometimes Indonesian is also used, so you understand better.)

From the statement above, students assume that literature will be easier to understand by using some of their mother tongues in explaining the content of the literature being studied. Then, students also stated that the interspersed use of English and Indonesian can increase students' understanding of the overall content of literature. Therefore, the use Indonesian language is needed in the classroom for students.

The influence of various rural problems on students' attitude

As for the statements that are not available in the questionnaire about the effect of rural conditions on students' attitudes such as inadequate school facilities, the economy of rural communities that depend on the agricultural sector, and the contents of textbooks are not following rural life. Regarding this, the researcher found that there was no effect of rural conditions on students' attitudes. The following is an explanation to strengthen this data.

Student 1:”*Meskipun sekolah kami ada di desa tapi saya sendiri punya motivasi untuk belajar kak terutama bahasa inggris, karena bahasa inggris sangat penting bagi kehidupan mendatang*”. (Even though our school is in the village, I myself have the motivation to learn, especially English, because English is very important for my future life.)

Student 2: ”*Tidak kak, walaupun kami memakai buku dari pusat dan situasi di bukunya memang berbeda dengan kehidupan kami disini, saya rasa kita bisa mencarinya melalui smartphone, saya bisa melihat percakapan antar dua orang asing di negara berbeda malahan kak, jadi ga sulit lagi.*” (No, even though we use books from the center and the situation in the book is different from our life here, I think we can look it up via smartphone, I can see conversations between

two foreigners in different countries, even so it's not difficult anymore)

Student 3: “tidak ada pengaruh sama sekali kak, walaupun kadang fasilitasnya kurang tapi saya bisa cari tau lewat YouTube di smartphone kak” (there is no influence at all, sis, although sometimes the facilities are lacking, but I can find out via YouTube on my smartphone)

Student 4: “Kalo bagi saya tidak ada kak, saya mikirnya bahasa inggris itu penting kegunaannya bagi kami nanti, dengan pelajaran sastra kami belajar sambil menghibur diri juga kak karena pembelajarannya asik” (I have no idea, I think English is important for us later, with literature lessons we learn while entertaining ourselves too, because learning is fun.)

Student 5: “Saya tidak ada pengaruhnya kak, karena di kelas jika kami tidak tahu mengenai pelajaran bahasa inggris guru akan menyuruh kami melihat di hp masing-masing”(I have no influence, Sis, because in class if we don't know about English lessons the teacher will tell us to look at each other's smartphones)

Based on the statement above, basically students stated that rural conditions did not affect students' attitudes towards literature in English. This is due to the conclusion that literature is a fun and motivating lesson. Students also believe that literature in English has an important role in the lives of students in the future. In addition, students also think that although rural conditions are different from cities, students also follow developments in cities. Rural students can also find the lessons they learned on the latest YouTube platform on their respective smartphones.

Discussion

Based on the results of this research is similar to the previous studies are students' attitude towards English such as Ardeshir et al., (2015), Alfauzan & Hussain (2017), Getie (2020), Isti & Istikharoh (2019), Afdian et al., (2020) and Setianengsih et al., (2017) that rural senior high school students have positive attitude towards literature in English. On the contrary, the result of this study is different from the research was conducted by Zulkefly et al., (2019) that students in rural senior high schools have negative attitudes towards literature in English.

Based on the findings above, seeing from the problems faced by rural high school students does not make it an excuse for students to have a negative attitude towards literature. Rural students are fully aware of the importance of using English in the future. In addition, students realize the benefits gained from learning English is also a determining factor for students' attitudes. Students find that literature in English can improve various English skills that are useful for them later. Furthermore, although there are many obstacles that rural students encounter such as inadequate learning, limited economy and also the source books used do not refer to rural life, in the end students can outsmart them by using smartphones to open websites that support learning process.

Other reason rural students have a positive attitude towards literature in English is rural students realized that studying literature in English is necessary for improving students' English skills (Othman, 2015). In line with that, another reason why students have positive attitude towards literature is they learn song. According Pratiwi, (2018), song is enjoyable because songs have new words and phrases, easy and simple topic that students like most to learn such as love and teenage life topics. Therefore, rural students have a positive attitude towards literature in English.

The findings of positive rural students' attitudes are most likely because the statements presented to students are still general in nature. As for statements on literary genres, students like short stories, songs and riddles because students are more familiar with these genres. This is supported by the existence of these three genres in the curriculum of high school students Dymoke and Hughes (2009). However, weaknesses in the reading skills of rural students affect students' motivation to start reading novels outside of the classroom (Azlina, 2020). Hence, novels are not taught in schools causing a negative attitude.

In line with that, poetry has also become a genre that students do not like. The researcher found that poetry learning provides different challenges for teachers and students (Killander (2011). Teachers and students tend to experience difficulties in the linguistic aspects of poetry. In learning poetry, the teacher does not have the confidence to read poetry in front of students. The teacher also did not know the level of rural students' knowledge of poetry. The teacher only provides teaching materials without considering the basic level of understanding that rural students have.

Regarding the genre of literature, the students prefer songs compared to other genres. The song is a favorite genre because the song uses simple language, is closely related to everyday life, and is also easy to enjoy. however, the novel is the literary genre that students are least interested in. The students claim that the novel has a long text that contains a lot of difficult vocabulary so that it causes boredom when reading or studying it. This finding also found in previous studies (Ghazali, 2009)

Furthermore, literature is useful to improve students' skill in English and learn the value of life. First, literature can increase students' vocabulary. This is supported by the statements of students who are often faced with unfamiliar vocabulary during literature learning in English (Karakaya, 2013). In general, when students were studying literary reading, students will tend to search for unfamiliar vocabulary using translation tools. Then, students will remember the meaning of those words to interpret the following texts. This finding is supported by Lazar, 1993 as cited in Afdian & Wahyuni, 2020.

Second, students can learn moral values when reading literary texts. This is found when students study short stories, plays and also songs. This will be useful for students' lives in the future to become better individuals. This is in line with several previous opinions, such as Alfauzan & Hussain, (2017) and Othman, (2015). Learning literature can also increase students' emotional awareness (Lazar, 1993). Students claimed that learning English can help them in the future (Shirkhani, 2016). In short, by learning literature in English, it can encourage students to have positive attitudes towards learning English in general.

Finally, students can improve their basic skills in English through literature (Collie and Slater, 1987). This can be seen from the increasing ability of students in

listening, speaking, writing and reading. First, literature can improve listening skills. Students can understand various meanings (interpersonal, ideational, textual) in various interpersonal oral texts and monologues, especially those in the form of short stories, poetry and songs. In addition, the familiarization of students with the sound of English can stimulate students to respond quickly to the meaning of each word (Ward, 1980 as quoted in Ranggen).

Second, literature can improve students' reading skills. When studying poetry and short stories, students retrained to read the text in front of the class. This activity can help students to practice their reading skills so that students become more fluent in English. In addition, students can also improve speaking skills through drama learning. Students will be required to master roles that contain dialogue. That way, students can increase their confidence to speak in front of the class. From drama activities, all students get a role so that it can reduce students' anxiety in using English. If this activity is implemented effectively, it will be valuable academic results. This idea is supported by Alasmari & Alshae, (2020).

In the learning process, students tend to confuse with the teacher's explanation about the contents of literature. The students hope that the teacher can use some Indonesian as their mother tongue in explaining the contents of the literature. At the same time, students also hope to be able to use Indonesian in explaining the contents of literature in front of the class. As a result, learning becomes easier to understand for students so that they can achieve learning objectives. This research is supported by (Yadav, 2014). In his research, there were findings in the form of using the mother tongue in foreign language classes to help students as a whole. He also stated that teachers can use the mother language when it is necessary. In the learning process, students tend to confuse with the teacher's explanation about the contents of literature. The students hope that the teacher can use some Indonesian as their mother tongue in explaining the contents of the literature.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of data analysis and discussion that have been described, rural students have a positive attitude towards literature in English regardless of the influence of socio-geographical background. It can be concluded that rural students are interested in learning literature in English. Students have positive attitude because of the nature of literature that is enjoyable. In addition, students believed that learning literature can improve students' English.

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