

Implementing Various Strategies in Teaching English through Literature in Senior High School

Muhammad Bunayya Ulul Azmi*, Mohammad Aufal Maram, Wahyu Indah Mala Rohmana

*Email: bunayya325@gmail.com

ARTICLE

ABSTRACT

Keywords:

literature, teaching methods, kinds of literature, strategies

Learning English through literature is one of the various ways to improve our English since it includes many aspects, speaking and listening that are used in daily interaction, and reading skills that cannot be separated from literacy. Various ways of teaching method and strategies have been developed in the past few years. Based on the previous explanation, the researchers want to find out the kinds of literature (drama, short stories, novels, song) being taught in the class, and what methods are used by the teacher. Qualitative research using an interview method was carried out to collect the data. The finding indicated that school teaching programs had used some kinds of literature in teaching and learning activities. Since there are some branches in literature, the research participant mentioned that the one used were drama, song, and narrative text (poems, short stories, novels). The aim of using this strategy is to strengthen the relationship between two different aspects of educational pioneers, so both of them could support and embrace their differences.

INTRODUCTION

Basic English skills such as writing, reading, and listening are essential as a milestone of English learning journey that are useful in real life. There are plenty of learning methods that can be used to improve our English. One of them is through literature. Our curriculum itself has been designed using literature to improve students' English using fixed ways of learning and teaching material. Learning English through literature is one of various ways to improve our English since it includes many aspects, speaking and listening, that are used in daily interaction, and reading skills that cannot be separated from literacy. The most used method of language teaching was translation of literature texts in their main language since literature providing additional material such as practice, vocabulary, and translation (Liaw, 2001). Literature has a lot of branches that can be used to improve students' English skills so the students can be more successful in learning English as their second or even third language.

Nevertheless, how to maximize the usage of literature to its best potency, what relation between reading and literature are, what method are best used at certain levels are some questions aimed for the teachers (Carter, 2007). In using literature, different levels of difficulties can be applied and adjusted based on the student level. In senior high school, learning English using literature has become a common method used. However, the time provided for teacher in teaching and learning activities is very limited. It affects the teacher being required to be more creative in their teaching method using literature to keep in pace with the syllabus designed. There are several types in literature: drama, poetry, narrative text using fables, and novels. Each of them has an art in studying it. Various ways of teaching methods have been developed over the past few years, while pandemic has morphed the conventional teaching method

into new and fresh teaching using online platforms. Based on the previous explanation, the researchers want to find out the kinds of literature (drama, short stories, novel, song) being taught in the class, and what methods used by teachers.

METHOD

This research used a qualitative descriptive method to find out what methods and strategies used by teachers in teaching and learning English using literature in school. The research instruments used were an audio recording and notes for an interview that was held in one day with an English teacher specialized in the third year of senior high school. The purpose of this method was to know further about the methods used in teaching kinds of literature at SMA Panjura Malang. Researchers also used other sources taken from journals and articles from the internet to strengthen the point.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Researchers made a list of questions asked to the English teacher. From the answers given, researchers found that the school teaching program had already used some kinds of literature in teaching and learning activities. The responses of the overall students were good. Unfortunately, the students only had very small amount of time to learn because of the curriculum designed. The English class was only held twice a week; each meeting consisted of 90 minutes. According to the interview, some types of literature the teacher used included drama, song, and narrative texts (poems, short stories, novels). In every meeting, the teacher taught some of the literary works simultaneously in creative ways in order to achieve the effectiveness of learning progress in a very limited time.

For drama, the strategy used was that the students were told to do a what so called “mini-drama”, which was divided into some groups of 4-6 students, and the teacher decided the theme for their drama. The students were given time between 30-40 minutes to create a small drama that would be performed in front of the class. The aspects that determined their score were from the students’ fluency, comprehension, and storyline. On some big days in Indonesia such as Teachers Day, and Independence Day, the teacher arranged a drama project that was performed in a school event. The actors who played in it were selected based on their willingness, fluency in English, and compatibility with the characters to be played in. The teacher stated that the benefits of using drama is it is very effective and it covers all skills needed in English learning. In addition, drama is an interesting way in teaching English since it could give materials for listening and language productivity, allow the students to use their existing basic language and improve their language abilities (Chauhan, 2004). It also makes a significant progress related to writing and reading. Shortly, the use of drama in the classroom could provide the students with an opportunity to do learning by doing and experiencing more active listening, not only repetitive practice (Clipson-Boyles, 1998).

Despite the huge potential in the use of drama to motivate and enlighten the students, the results can sometimes fail to persuade. In the context of teaching English language, the possibilities are absolutely limited by the fluency and language basics of the students. Knowing this, a language teaching strategy that insists on the results instead of the process may have a negative effect on students’ excitement and motivation in learning English using literature (Zafeiriadou, 2009). The teacher mentioned some factors that hinder the use of drama in learning process. The first one is that some of the students were shy and they might find drama is scary and frustrating. The second is that both students and teacher needed extra time to spend on planning, constructing the script, and developing scenario of the drama. The students had to train for a long time before the drama was performed. The teacher mentioned that they required at least 2-3 weeks to prepare for the drama project performance for the Independence Day school event, and it still had not reached their best performance yet. The third problem is sometimes either the students or teacher had to pay some money to buy some properties, decorations, preparations for the sake of making the drama successful.

The next one was using some English songs, the method used was the teacher provided a paper with a lyric of the songs written in it, but some words were filled with blanks. The teacher then played a song on an audio speaker, repeated it twice or more, and the students had to fill the blanks with the correct lyrics. They also had to analyse the content and meaning of the lyrics to find the song title and to find some vocabulary they might find difficult. By using this method, students were required to practice their listening skill to find out what are the correct lyrics as well as reading skills to write down the words with correct spelling. The scoring system was decided by how many blanks that were filled with correct answer and the analysis about the meaning of the song. Some of the benefits of learning English using songs are that the students are familiar with songs because they tend to listen to this branch of literature on daily basis. It is a good way to improve students' listening, writing, and reading skills; students become easier to remember new vocabulary because they are repetitive practice and presented in unique rhymes and patterns; it is also an effective strategy to improve students' behaviour and positivity, so they became more excited and enthusiast to learn English (Kirsch, 2008).

The teacher also said that another kind of literature used is trough narrative texts such as poems, short stories, and novels. The method used in poems and short stories is that after the teacher explained the material, then some of the students had to read a poem, a fable, or a legend and do story telling in front of the class, and practice it in front of other students. The students were also required to find the meaning of the literature since they could learn a lot about wisdom, life lesson, and motivational quotes trough short stories and poems. In this way, it could develop readers' language skills and increase their awareness about literacy, and it could also provide them with an understanding and knowledge of another culture (Lazar, 1993), and the students could also learn about the past and present events and about people's customs and traditions (Erkaya, 2005). Furthermore, it can be used as a stimulus to improve the students' language skills (Erkaya, 2005), and improve students' creativity (Brumfit & Carter, 2000).

The method used in using novels in English learning was by using a more modern system. Teacher divided the students into some small groups in WhatsApp groups or Telegram, and gave the students some English novels materials in PDF forms to their smartphones. It was started by using some novels written in the mother language; Indonesia, some of the local novels given were *Ayah* by Andrea Hirata, and *Tentang Kamu* by Tere Liye, then slowly switched to English novels. The students were required to read the novels at home, then later they reviewed in the classroom meeting. The teacher then told the student that they had to write and interpret the novels they had read with their own language in a piece of paper into a form of synopsis which later on was be submitted to the teacher. The students also had to write down all of the aspects in the novel such as storyline, plots, settings, points of view, and orientation of the story. Then the teacher chose 3-5 students to presented it in the class and told the other students what they got from the novels.

The benefits of using this kind of literature as a technique for teaching is that the students could learn the basic language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) and language areas (vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation) at the same time (Hişmanoğlu, 2005). Since novels are a valuable kind of literature that present us a real life like settings, it is also a way to enrich cultural and language understanding. Moreover, learning through novels could provide the students with a full and colourful setting from many social aspects and regional backgrounds. The students could also discover the way the characters in novels see their world, their thoughts, feelings, customs, traditions, possessions; what they buy, believe in, fear, enjoy; how they speak and behave in different settings (Hişmanoğlu, 2005).

The teacher also mentioned some of the disadvantages in using novels. The students might find difficulties to understand the meaning of certain words or sentences since the language and vocabulary used in novels are not always the same as their daily conversation expressions. To solve this, students used dictionaries or Google Translate to find the actual meaning of it. The other problem is that the students did having enough time to read the whole novel because they also had another activity at home and homework and assignments given from different teachers which limited their time in reading. Another problem is the students' low interest in reading led some of the students unable to finish reading it even though they had been given enough time.

In addition, the teacher also mentioned some other factors that supported the effectiveness of the students' learning progress. For example, in some conditions such as the students came late to the class, the teacher gave them a punishment. The punishment given was that the students had to read a poem or sing a song in front of the class. The main idea of using this method was to develop students' discipline and self-awareness while learning using literature at the same time. The other method is that the teacher used a modern alternative way to improve students' interest in learning literature. The teacher gave an assignment that the students had to make a video; reading aloud or explaining the material that had been given before the class. The students were allowed to use different platforms on their smartphones such as YouTube, TikTok, or CapCut to record their video, and post it on the platforms. By this way, the students were expected to be more enthusiast in learning literature, since the method used for this was considered convenient and comfortable for the students as most of the students had been familiar with these platforms

Another important supporting factor implemented by the teacher is the relationship between teachers and students. This is an effective way used by the teacher to improve the use of literature beyond the active learning and teaching process in the class. Keep in mind that this relationship should have been in an equal proportion between the role as a professional teacher and as a "parent". This balance is required to implement the supportive and helpful behaviour to the students (Hagenauer & Violet, 2014). For instance, the teacher was very open for the students to ask anything about the material that had been taught in the class, or even share their personal problems. The students often asked the teacher on WhatsApp about how to do the assignment, or to elaborate more about the materials given. Furthermore, the teacher often invited the students to the teachers' house to talk about their assignments and help them to do it, and the teacher also stated "The students said that I'm like their own mother". The teacher also often gave the students rewards, by complementing them, and giving them snacks or meals as an appreciation of their great works. The aim of using this strategy is to strengthen the relationship between two different aspects of educational pioneers so both of them could support and embrace their own differences.

CONCLUSION

Some types of literature had been used in school teaching programs. Overall, the students' responses were good. Due to the curriculum design, students had very little time to learn. There were only two English classes in a week, each lasting 90 minutes. Among the branches of literature, the teacher mentioned drama, song, and narrative texts (poems, short stories, novels) used in teaching.

A typical drama strategy was to have students do a "mini-drama", divided into groups of 4-6 students, and the teacher decides the theme for their drama. During class time, the students created a short drama that was presented in front of the class. Their score was determined by their fluency, understanding, and storyline. Using some English songs, the teacher provided a paper with the lyric written on it, but some words were left blank. The teacher then played a song on the speaker, repeated it twice or more, and the students had to fill in the blanks with the correct lyrics. Furthermore, they need to analyse the contents and meanings of the lyrics to determine the song title, as well as find some vocabulary that may be difficult for them. The scoring system was based on how many blanks were filled with correct answers and the meaning of the song. Another type of literature used by the teacher is narrative text, such as poems, short stories, and novels. Poems and short stories were taught by having students to read a poem, fable, or legend in front of the class, practiced in front of classmates after the teacher explained the material. In English learning, novels were used in a more modern way. Students were divided into small groups in WhatsApp or Telegram groups, and provided with English novel material in pdf form. Students were required to read the novels at home, then reviewed them in the classroom. The teacher then instructed the student to write and interpret the novels they have read in their own language on a piece of paper into a form of synopsis which should later be submitted to the teacher.

In addition, the teacher also mentioned some other factors that supported the effectiveness of the students' learning progress. In some conditions in which the students came late to the class, the

teacher gave them a punishment. The punishment given was that the students had to read a poem or sing a song in front of the class. The other important supporting factor implemented by the teacher is the relationship between teachers and their students. The teacher was very open for the student to ask anything about the material that had been taught in the class, or even their problems. The aim of using this strategy is to strengthen the relationship between two different aspects of educational pioneers so both of them could support and embrace their differences.

REFERENCES

- Brumfit, C. J. & Carter, R. A. (2000). *Literature and Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Carter, R. & Long, M. N. (1991). *Teaching Literature*. New York: Longman.
- Carter, R. (2007). Literature and language teaching 1986–2006: A review. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 17(1), 3-13.
- Chauhan, V. (2004). Drama techniques for teaching English. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 10(10), 3.
- Clipson-Boyles, S. 1998. *Drama in Primary English Teaching*. London: David Fulton Publishers Ltd.
- Erkaya, O.R. (2005). Benefits of using short stories in the EFL context. *Asian EFL Journal*, 8. http://relinguistica.azc.uam.mx/no007/no07_art09.pdf
- Hagenauer, G., & Volet, S. E. (2014). Teacher–student relationship at university: an important yet under-researched field. *Oxford Review of Education*, 40(3), 370-388.
- Hişmanoğlu, M. (2005). Teaching English through literature. *Journal of Language and Linguistic studies*, 1(1), 53-66.
- Kirsch, C. (2008). *Teaching Foreign Languages in the Primary School*. London: Continuum.
- Lazar, G. (2008). *Literature and Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Liaw, M.-L. (2001), Exploring Literary Responses in an EFL Classroom. *Foreign Language Annals*, 34, 35–44.
- Zafeiriadou, N. (2009). Drama in language teaching. *Issue*, 23, 4-9.