

LITERATURE AS A MEDIA TO ATTRACT STUDENTS' INTEREST IN "ENGLISH CONVERSATION CLUB"

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Abstract: Literature plays a significant role in enhancing students' vocabulary, refining their grammar understanding, and honing their writing skills. Integrating literature into extracurricular activities, such as the English Conversation Club (ECC), can be an effective tool in capturing students' interest in learning English. This study explores how literature is used within the ECC at SMA Nasional Malang to attract students, focusing on the media and techniques employed by the coach. The research centered on interviews with the club's mentor and three student participants, investigating their experiences and perceptions of the role of literature in the learning process. Initially, the club mainly attracted proficient English speakers, but the introduction of literary elements such as drama and storytelling broadened its appeal to a wider range of students. Drama and storytelling, in particular, were found to be the most effective materials in capturing students' attention and fostering indirect learning. As a result, educators adapted their teaching methods to include these literary approaches to reinvigorate the learning experience and encourage greater student participation.

Keywords: *English conversation club, drama, literature, storytelling.*

Literature is an expression of thoughts and feelings. Literature also deals with issues of life experience because the words used in literature are powerful, effective, and even compelling. Literature also provides a sense of entertainment and shows the facts hidden in it. According to Rohman and Wicaksono (2021), literature is summarized as a permanent form of expression in words, either written or spoken that is specially arranged in a pattern or form that is acceptable and enjoyable.

Literature has been an integral part of human civilization since ancient times. Throughout its history, literature has played an important role in enriching culture and conveying profound messages to its readers. In its development, literature has undergone a significant transformation. In the past, literature was mostly conveyed through oral forms and stories that were passed down through generations. However, with the invention of the writing system, literature began to be written down in a form that could be accessed by many people. In addition, literature also reflects social changes and values in society. Literature becomes a medium for writers to criticize and fight for important issues, such as human rights, gender equality, and social justice. Literature is also a means to express feelings, experiences and thoughts that may be difficult to express in other forms.

In addition literature also has an important effect on education, especially in English education. The use of literature in English language education has long been recognized for its significant role in developing students' linguistic competence and cultural understanding. Literature offers exposure to authentic language, varied writing styles, and rich cultural contexts that are essential for effective language acquisition. As stated by Arinah Fransori (2022), literature plays an essential role in language education, particularly in enhancing language proficiency and deepening emotional and cultural awareness. Similarly, Ahyar (2019) emphasizes that literary forms such as poems, short stories, novels, and drama are not only artistic expressions but also practical tools to improve vocabulary, grammar, writing, and reading comprehension. These literary genres stimulate students' creativity and help them express ideas in more nuanced and meaningful ways.

While literature is predominantly used in classroom settings, its application is not limited to formal instruction. Schools can also utilize literary content in extracurricular activities to create alternative and engaging learning environments. Lestari (2016) and Yusril & Elen (2023) argue that extracurricular activities serve as an educational space beyond the classroom where students' interests and talents are nurtured. These activities, when designed effectively, can foster intrinsic motivation and provide students with the

opportunity to explore language learning in a more relaxed and enjoyable context. One such example is the English Conversation Club (ECC), which is increasingly adopted in schools to support students' spoken English skills through interactive, student-centered activities.

Among the many strategies to make ECC more engaging, integrating literature—particularly drama and storytelling—has proven to be effective. Meisania (2022) highlights that literature supports both receptive (reading and listening) and productive (speaking and writing) skills, making it highly suitable for conversation-based clubs. Hidayat, Franchsicha, and Rohmana (2023) found that implementing literature such as fiction and drama in ECC sessions not only improved students' English proficiency but also fostered creativity and confidence. Similarly, Kaowiwattanakul (2020) demonstrated that literature circles encouraged students to speak more actively and collaboratively, thus enhancing their speaking fluency and motivation. In another study, Zuhriyah (2017) showed that storytelling as a literary-based technique had a positive effect on students' fluency and confidence in English, making it a suitable tool for informal speaking practice.

Despite the growing interest in the use of literature in extracurricular settings, limited research has focused on how literary materials are specifically utilized in ECCs at the high school level, particularly in the Indonesian context. Most studies emphasize classroom-based applications or focus on university students. Therefore, there is a gap in understanding how literature can be practically applied as a medium to foster student participation and interest in ECCs in secondary education.

This study aims to address that gap by exploring the application of literary genres—especially drama and storytelling—as tools to attract students to participate in the English Conversation Club at SMA Nasional Malang. By examining how these literary elements are used and how students respond to them, this research seeks to provide practical insights for teachers and educational practitioners interested in enriching extracurricular English programs through literature.

METHOD

This study used qualitative descriptive method to explore how literature is utilized to promote student interest in the English Conversation Club (ECC) extracurricular activities at SMA Nasional Malang. A qualitative approach was chosen as it enables researchers to investigate participants' perceptions, behaviors, and the context of the activities in depth (Creswell, 2014). This approach was suitable for capturing the subjective experiences of both the ECC coach and student members.

Research Site and Participants

The study was conducted at SMA Nasional Malang, focusing specifically on the ECC extracurricular program. The participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure they had direct involvement in ECC activities. The research involved one ECC coach (referred to as Teacher/T) and three student members (referred to as Student 1, Student 2, and Student 3) who were part of the club's daily management team. These participants were chosen due to their active roles and ability to provide rich insights into the integration of literature in ECC sessions.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using two main instruments: semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations. Interviews were conducted individually with each participant. The interview guide consisted of 10 open-ended questions, covering topics such as the types of literary texts used (e.g., poetry, short stories, drama scripts), methods of implementation, student reactions, and perceived benefits or challenges. Each interview lasted between 30 to 45 minutes and was audio-recorded with the participants' consent. Interview transcripts were later transcribed verbatim for analysis. Furthermore, observations were carried out during four ECC meetings over a one-month period. The researcher observed how literary materials were introduced and used during club activities, the nature of student participation, and the overall atmosphere of the sessions. Observation checklists and field notes were used to systematically record behaviors, interactions, and instructional techniques related to the use of literature.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's (1994) interactive model, which consists of the following steps: Data Reduction: Interview transcripts and field notes were read multiple times. Important segments were coded manually, focusing on categories such as "types of literature used," "student engagement," "teaching strategies," and "perceived impact." Data Display: A thematic matrix was created to

organize codes and facilitate the comparison between teacher and student responses. Conclusion Drawing and Verification: Emerging patterns were interpreted to understand how literature contributed to student interest in ECC. Triangulation between interview and observation data was used to ensure the validity and consistency of findings. Throughout the research process, ethical considerations such as informed consent, voluntary participation, anonymity, and confidentiality were strictly maintained. Participants were given pseudonyms, and all data were stored securely.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The English Conversation Club was established in 2017 by the English teacher at SMA Nasional Malang, Miss Fida. Her initial goal in establishing this club was to provide a platform for students who are interested in English to develop their skills, but over time this goal has changed to become more competitive, their focus is now on student achievement in every competition. At the beginning of the club, it only had 5 members because at that time not many students were interested in English, many of them thought that English was a difficult language to learn. At that time, Miss Fida also chose to build branding so that many students would be interested in the club.

"I believe that the club's membership will increase once the club branding is established" (T)

At first the students who entered the English Conversation Club were selected students who were indeed capable of speaking English, but by applying literature it apparently attracted many students to learn English. Gradually, many students wanted to join because they were interested in the subjects of literature taught such as drama and storytelling. Finally, they participated in a storytelling competition with only a few members and won an award, since then the club's image began to form and began to attract many students without the need to promote door-to-door.

"From a total of 5 students at that time, thank God, until now those who participate in ECC are increased until 50-60 students" (T)

English Conversation Club extracurricular activity is held on Wednesdays at 03.00 p.m. after school hours. This club has 2 categories, namely Performance and Olympics. Performance contains students who like to perform in front of the stage and have good speech, and the Olympics contains students who are interested in English Academic. This club provides different materials between the two categories, the best differing from the Olympic category for the Performance category the material is not stuck on certain books and is more focused on developing self-confidence and speech skills. According to Miss Fida, teaching material such as grammar and complicated structures is not effective to teach because it will only make students confused and lazy to learn English.

"The club has adequate facilities for students. Students who initially could not speak English and did not know the tenses in English became aware. We teach with simple methods and just teach some common tenses such as simple present and present continuous. Because when we teach all the tenses and they are obliged to know all, they will be depressed and no longer want to come to the club in the following week" (T)

Therefore, every meeting they are given material to find and memorise vocabulary that they do not know, this aims to enrich their English vocabulary so that later when speaking it is not limited by vocabulary. According to Kampung Inggris Language Center (2023), for the correct sequence in learning English, mastering vocabulary ranks first or must come first. This club also held an "English Got Talent" event where each club member showed their talents in storytelling and drama. Before this event was held, students who signed up for this club were only students who had an interest in English, but since "English Got Talent" was held it has attracted the attention of many students, especially students who have no interest in English and students who are not confident in their English skills. The purpose of this event is to attract students to learn English, and to find talents that are worthy of being included in the competition. Miss Fida, the mentor of the club, stated that the club could be as big as it is now because of the role of the literature itself.

"It's because of the literature that the number of participants increased, They love and are very interested in drama and storytelling" (T)

Because literature attracts many students, every meeting all club members ask to be given materials such as movie reviews, dramas, and sing a song. They provide these requests and eventually the students will come again next week. According to Miss Fida, if compared to providing material that is too academic, students will feel insecure about their abilities, depressed and lazy to come in the coming week.

"When I give them tenses, they don't feel confident in their abilities and eventually they become too lazy to learn English. But when I give them singing material, they immediately get excited and the next day they will come again to this club. The most important thing now is to cultivate their love and attention to English." (T)

The application of literature in this club is divided into 2 parts, each of which has an important role in attracting students' attention.

Drama as the Implementation of Literature

Drama is a literary work that aims to depict life by conveying conflicts and emotions with staged movements and dialog, this learning also trains students' language skills. Subyanto & Yuniawan (2016) investigated the most dominant skill in this learning is speaking skill in accordance with the dominant element of drama which is dialog. The presence of drama in the learning process has many benefits, especially for literacy and language development. Drama is a good form of literature that is suitable for students and the place, situation and scenario are easily understood by students. In addition, drama is also a strategy to motivate the active presence of students in the classroom with enthusiasm, fun, and laughter and helps collaboration between students. Not only that, In drama there is role playing. In role playing, communication skills with players are emphasized. By communicating, students' foreign language skills will improve (Kiromim Baroroh, 2011). Role playing method has advantages including developing student creativity, reducing verbosity, simple direction, allowing interaction between students, and fostering critical thinking.

Therefore, drama has the potential to improve students' vocabulary and pronunciation, as the internalisation of vocabulary requires the understanding of words or expressions. Drama and other literary works have a lot of artistic, intellectual and emotional enjoyment as actors often strive to express their perspective on the human experience through the creative and emotional use of language. This gives students a lot of motivation and confidence to learn language in a more creative way. According to Miss Fida, drama is one of the materials that students are most interested in. They like to play the role of other people and act in front of many people. This material makes them learn English indirectly. When reading the script they will try to understand what the content is in the script and they will practise how to pronounce the language correctly.

"For example, my student Tartu, she is the most happy with literature. At first, she can barely speak English, but when she is given the task to play drama, she speaks fluently. That's the important point of literature." (T)

What makes the application of drama in this school different from others is the way the teacher approaches the students and there is a selection that makes the drama more interesting. Prastowo (2015) analyzed that teachers are less creative and less rich in innovation so that students are not interested in learning. That is why Miss Fida Trying to innovate, creating new ways to make the drama more interesting. She created an audition where students were selected to be a character that suits their personality, this attracted students including students who are not very good at English.

"I hold an auditions and direct them so that they play according to their characters, they also can choose whatever character that they want to play with the condition that they must explore the character" (T)

Of course, this audition system for drama is held in the English Conversation Club because according to Miss Fida, it is too complicated to implement this in regular class. Kolipah (2022) The time

portion for learning literature drama is very limited, given the many competencies that must be mastered by students in this subject. With a different system from regular classes, this attracts students to join the club.

"For me personally, I joined the club because I was interested in the drama, Miss Fida held auditions and at the end of the year the club held a performance and we performed the drama on stage. Compared to the drama at my school, it's a lot more effort if you ask me and a lot more fun" (S)

That way many students who initially avoided English became interested and students who had difficulty speaking English became fluent due to the influence of the drama held in this club and the system that did not force students to speak English.

"I organized a drama play in this club in the third year, and it attracted a lot of students to join the English Conversation Club. I just realized that this subject has a lot of influence in attracting students to speak English." (T)

Storytelling as the Implementation of Literature

In the learning process at school, speaking skills are needed to express opinions, ideas, give and receive information. Therefore, the author makes storytelling as a medium in improving communication skills. Desmarita (2021) also pointed out storytelling is a strategy or way of learning to communicate creatively in English language learning. Through this method, according to Nafa (2021), it is easier for learners to increase vocabulary and get new language structures. With this, learners can express their feelings, values, fears, hopes and dreams. Speaking is the ability to utter language sounds to express or convey thoughts, ideas, or feelings orally.

Based on observations made by researchers at SMA Nasional Malang, storytelling is one of the strategies or media to attract students to join ECC, English Conversation Club. Researchers found that after applying the strategy, many of the students joined the club. The existence of storytelling in ECC is due to the lack of interest in joining the extracurricular. Therefore, the coach and some members took the initiative to add storytelling to it through the Got Talent event.

"In Got Talent, we provide many class options. Previously at ECC there was only the English Olympiad, so now we add speech and storytelling classes to attract students." (T)

Zahra et al. (2019) conducted an in-depth analysis of the storytelling method as applied in educational settings and identified six key stages that structure the storytelling process effectively. The first stage involves conveying the purpose and theme of the narrative activity. At this point, the teacher introduces the learning materials and informs students about the objective of the session, such as listening to a fairy tale. This stage serves to set the context and help students focus and mentally prepare for the learning activity. By clearly communicating the theme, teachers ensure that students understand the goals and concentrate throughout the session. The second stage is the organization of student seating. The classroom layout is intentionally arranged to ensure all students can hear and see clearly during the storytelling session. To maintain order and avoid disruptive behavior, ground rules are established and mutually agreed upon by both teachers and students. In this study, singing was used not only as a transitional tool but also as a means of engaging students and preparing them mentally and emotionally for the activity. Singing created a fun and relaxed atmosphere, making students feel more comfortable and ready to participate.

The third stage is the initial phase of the storytelling activity. In this phase, the teacher uses learning media to ask and answer questions related to the students' prior experiences, thus helping them connect the story to their own contexts. The story is typically introduced with a song, which boosts students' interest and enhances the overall learning experience. Singing also contributes to emotional well-being by promoting relaxation and regulating heart rate and brainwave activity. It stimulates alpha-theta brainwaves, which are known to foster creativity, accelerate learning, and enhance information retention. At this point, students are encouraged to practice their concentration and listening skills, and it is essential for the teacher to begin this stage thoughtfully to ensure optimal student engagement. The fourth stage is the development of the story by the teacher. As the storyteller, the teacher must carefully manage vocal elements such as volume,

pronunciation, and pacing, while also maintaining eye contact with students to sustain their attention and ensure emotional connection with the story. The fifth stage involves the selection of language that can evoke students' emotions and provoke thought. Here, the teacher may offer reflections or ask students questions related to the story's moral or consequences. This encourages students to critically evaluate the actions of characters, draw personal conclusions, and make thoughtful decisions based on the lessons learned. The final stage is the conclusion of the narrative activity, typically marked by a closing song or epilogue to solidify the story's ending and prevent misinterpretation or fragmented understanding among students. After the storytelling session, students are given the opportunity to further engage with the content by responding to questions and discussing the story they heard. The teacher also provides feedback and commentary, helping students to internalize the story's values and messages. Through these six stages, storytelling becomes a holistic learning approach that not only entertains but also educates and shapes character in an enjoyable and memorable way.

In accordance with the observations that have been made by researchers in one of Malang's private schools on how to implement literature, especially storytelling in ECC. Storytelling is done once a week, on Wednesday. The activity was attended by many students compared to other programs in ECC. The mentor or teacher explained that storytelling was implemented to make students more interested in learning languages through ECC. They present mentors for some ECC activity meetings. Where they are alumni of the school who are experts and have many achievements outside. Taking mentors from alumni with the aim of making it easier and motivating students in learning English. The students will also know more about the importance and influence of ECC in the outside world through them.

"ECC is held once a week. So, the system will change, like this week is storytelling, then next week is drama, and the next week is Olympics. We bring in mentors from alumni too, because they already know the ECC beforehand and about how the concept is and what they should convey to the students." (T)

Various ways are done, namely by watching movies or dramas in English. Then the students have to pay attention until the end. After that, each student is able to retell the movie or drama according to their own language and expression. They also write down some difficult or unfamiliar vocabulary and look up the meaning and memorize it.

"We also tell them to look for unfamiliar vocabulary and then look up the meaning together and memorize it while increasing their vocabulary." (T)

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Literature has been an inherent part of human civilization since ancient times. Throughout its history, literature has played an important role in enriching culture and conveying profound messages to its readers. In its development, literature has undergone relevant transformations. In addition, literature also has an important influence on education. Literature takes an important role in learning, especially in the development of language skills and cultural and emotional understanding. Not only in school, the application of literature is also done in extracurricular activities. Based on the research that the author obtained, drama and storytelling became one of the media to attract students to join ECC in one of the senior high schools in Malang. Drama and storytelling are able to attract many students to participate in ECC because they are applied creatively and have not been widely applied in the regular activities of this school. That way many students who initially avoided English became interested and students who had difficulty speaking English became fluent due to the influence of the drama held in this club and the system that did not force students to speak English.

Research on literature in the school has given positive results on interest in joining the ECC at SMA Nasional Malang. For this reason, every teacher who feels a lack of enthusiasm in learning, especially in English, applies the principles of literature, such as drama and storytelling in the learning process. In addition, the taking of subjects by researchers is still limited to observation, so researchers suggest conducting further research on a wider range of subjects and with more relevant methods.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to give our gratitude to Wahyu Indah Mala Rohmana, M.Pd who is the lecturer of Literature in ELT. She has helped us compile this journal. We would also like to thank the participants from SMA Nasional Bangsa who were willing to be interviewed.

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