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The Investigation of Literature as a Learning Media in Primary School

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Abstract. This research explores the didactic function of literature with a focus on its role as a learning medium in English language education at MI Sunan Kalijaga Malang, East Java. Using a descriptive qualitative method, the study utilized observation, documentation and interviews conducted with the grade 4 English teacher and 36 students. The literature investigation in this study is the use of reading books as the main learning media and the distinctive features of the curriculum applied at various grade levels. The difficulties faced by English teachers, who are aware of this problem, took the initiative to include their own curriculum reading materials to ensure a more cohesive learning experience for students. The importance of customized and contextually relevant learning materials, taking into account the differences between the K-13 curriculum and the standalone curriculum in terms of its integration with students' daily lives.

Keywords: Primary Concept; Education; Students

INTRODUCTION

English literature linguistically consists of the words "English" and "literature". In the Cambridge dictionary, literature is a written work which when compared to other writings has various excellence characteristics such as originality, artistry, aesthetics in content and expression, commonly known literary varieties are romances, short stories, dramas, epics and lyrics. According to Kanzunnudin (2012), literature is a work of art whose media is language and has a function as a tool to teach or instruct. It can also be stated that literature is the art of language to convey teachings. In essence, English literature is the artistic use of the English language to convey teachings, reflecting a rich and diverse tradition that spans various genres and forms.

The object of literary science is the literary elements that cause a language expression to be considered literature. In addition to the elements of language (structure, style, political function), historical, pragmatic and psychosocial factors also play a role (e.g., the element of fabrication in language communication, the development of the notion of literature, etc.).

According to Sukirman (2021), literature has several functions in human life, namely the recreative function (means of entertainment), didactic function (teaching or learning media), aesthetic function (beauty values), morality function (moral values, behavior, and attitudes), and religious function (spiritual messages). Literature with its didactic function means cultivating human beings with ideal values that can become a moral, intellectual, and spiritual foundation for the establishment of a peaceful society and nation, happy in this world and the hereafter. Literary works contain many truth values that are educative in a culture and contain courage in displaying them (Nurfarida, 2016). Therefore, it can be justified that literary works have a position that cannot be

underestimated in maintaining or recording a culture, or vice versa in forming a new culture, without eliminating its positive educational values.

This article focuses on the didactic function of literature which means that literature can be used as a learning media. In Indonesia, English has been taught at various school levels. This article will discuss English language learning at primary school level and how English literature plays a role in it. There are several previous studies related to literature in schools. The following are the results of a journal review related to literature in schools. Many research related to literature in schools have been conducted. There are studies that focus on strategies for teaching literature in junior high schools (Yossi Arisanti, 2011; Ariesca Lenny Marzulina, 2015). In addition, there are also studies related to literature in schools that have analyzed the challenges teaching English literature at primary school level (Purtanto et al, 2023).

Based on the review of previous research, there are some gaps that can be used for further research. Although previous studies have analyzed literature in schools, some researchers did not analyze what learning media to use to teach literature at the primary school level. In addition, some studies only focused on the junior high school level.

METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative method. Creswell (2009) explains that the qualitative research process involves essentials efforts, such as asking questions and procedures, collecting data, and analyzing data. In this article the researcher uses observation, documentation, and interview techniques directly to the school with structured questions, where the results of these observations and interviews are used as instruments and data collection on how the teaching of English literature is implemented at MI Sunan Kalijaga Karangbesuki, Lowokwaru, Malang, East Java on Tuesday, November 7, 2023. The objects of this research are coaches and the students in 4th grade with details of 1 coach and 36 members.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Through the interviews that have been conducted, researchers have obtained some information about the research topic being discussed. The results showed that the teaching of English literature taught in MI Sunan Kalijaga classes used reading books as the learning media. According to Andre, et al. (2019), learning media is described as a tool that facilitates the communication of information, messages, and learning materials. The primary goal is to enhance students' understanding of the concepts being taught, ultimately ensuring the proper and effective achievement of learning objectives. Learning media is very useful for teachers in teaching and helps students more easily absorb and understand lessons. The use of appropriate media is needed to increase basic knowledge and can attract student interest. This is so that the material is easier for students to see and understand by the teacher.

English learning at MI Sunan Kalijaga uses a different curriculum at each grade level. Based on the research conducted, it was found that students in grades 1-3 use reading books from the *K-13* curriculum. Meanwhile, grade 4 students use *Merdeka* curriculum reading books. The curriculum itself can be interpreted as all activities and learning experiences that students receive through the efforts and responsibilities of the school (Sukirman & Nugraha, 2016).

Meanwhile, according to Sari (2021), the curriculum is a strategic element in educational program services. The curriculum is an educational component that is used as a reference for all parties related to the implementation of the program or each educational unit, both by managers and organizers, especially by teachers and principals.

A well-designed curriculum is expected to yield positive educational experiences and outcomes. When a curriculum is thoughtfully developed, it can guide educators in delivering effective instruction, fostering student engagement, and facilitating the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Conversely, a poorly designed or outdated curriculum can hinder the educational process and lead

to suboptimal outcomes. It may fail to address the evolving needs of students or the broader educational landscape. In such cases, the educational experience may be less engaging, and the achievement of educational goals may be compromised. The curriculum can be used as a basis of reference that is relevant or in accordance with these educational objectives and can lead us towards achieving educational goals.

According to the informant, namely an English teacher in grade 4 MI Sunan Kalijaga said that the K-13 curriculum is difficult to implement at the elementary school level. Anwar in Rahmadayanti & Hartoyo, (2022) explains that the implementation of K-13 focuses on phenomena that occur in the surrounding environment such as natural, social, artistic and cultural phenomena through observing, questioning, trying, reasoning and communicating activities so that they are more creative, innovative and productive and ready to face problems. Based on that, elementary school students in grades 1-3 are still difficult to really implement the K-13 curriculum because of environmental factors that are less supportive of learning in nature, direct observation, and so on. In fact, according to this informant, the vocab taught in the K-13 curriculum reading books sounds foreign and is not related to students daily lives so that English learning is never maximized.

The informant also said that teaching English in grade 4 feels like teaching in grade 1. She is repeating from the beginning again because the curriculum used is different, so she cannot immediately continue the learning that has been given in grades 1-3. Therefore, the informant who also teaches in grade 2 took the initiative to use her own *Merdeka* curriculum reading books so that learning at each level is continuous.

The grade 4 English reading book uses the *Merdeka* curriculum which contains several chapters related to daily life. In general, the Merdeka curriculum, highlighting its characteristics such as diversity, intracurricular learning, flexibility for teachers, and the optimization of content to allow learners to explore concepts and strengthen competences (Baruta, 2023).

The vocabulary in these reading books is also not far from the daily vocab related to students. In addition to containing writings, there are also illustrations of images that can make it easier for students to understand the material. Even at the end of each chapter, interesting song lyrics are included and contain literature in it because it has a-a-a-a like a rhyme. According to Waluyo in Endang (2021) rhyme is the repetition of sounds in poetry to form musicality One example of the song lyrics is,

*The wheels on the bus go round and round
Round and round round and round
The wheels on the bus go round and round
All through the town
The wiper on the bus go wuush wuush wuush
wuush wuush wuush wuush wuush wuush
The wiper on the bus go wuush wuush wuush
All through the town
The people on the bus go up and down
Up and down up and down
The people on the bus go up and down
All through the town
The money on the bus go cling cling cling
Cling cling cling cling cling
The money on the bus go cling cling cling
All through the town*
(English Reading Book for 4 grade, page 119)

For example, in the first stanza there is a rhyme /aund/ in the word round and the second stanza contains a sound/rhyme ending /uʃ/, namely in the word wush. These words are repeated several times to make it easier to sing so that students get used to pronouncing English.

In addition to song lyrics, the grade 4 English reading book contains practice questions about composing words into sentences. According to the informant, grade 4 students are expected to be able to compose short sentences and be able to pronounce vocabulary correctly and precisely. He also uses a projector as an additional learning medium for vocabulary that is still connected to that in the book to maximize learning material.

CONCLUSION

Research on the use of literature as a medium of learning in primary schools shows significant potential as an effective educational tool. It has been observed that literature plays an important role in cultivating skills and boosting the development of English language capabilities in primary school students. In addition, literature also serves as a means to instill moral values, empathy and cultural awareness in students.

Other investigation results found the use of reading books as learning media for students to learn English. The content contained in the reading book varies according to the grade level. Reading books in grades 1-3 use the K-13 curriculum reference which contains new English vocabulary and is less related to students' daily lives. While reading books in grade 4 use the independent curriculum which contains vocabulary related to students daily lives and is integrated with exercise questions or song lyrics.

The difference in curriculum made the resource person who was an English teacher in grade 4 MI Sunan Kalijaga feel difficult. Because of this difference, she could not directly continue the material from the previous grade level but taught new material that was not continuous in grade 4 due to differences in the material taught in grades 1-3. The resource person even took the initiative to use her own independent curriculum reading books when teaching in grades 1-3.

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