Teaching Literature: Infusing Literary Works on Language and Emotional Intelligence Improvement

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Abstract. Literary works and language teaching need more prior focus on their investigation, specifically on seeing how those two things affect language proficiency. This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of teaching literature in improving students' English proficiency while also considering other aspects such as empathy, emotional intelligence, and aesthetic satisfaction. The method used was a pre-experimental design with a sample of 28 students. Before the intervention, a needs analysis was conducted to measure students' reading literacy, reading interest, and aesthetic interaction with literature. Learning objectives designed based on this needs analysis were then implemented. The data were taken through conducting need analysis, treatment, and measurement. The findings showed a significant increase in the student's English proficiency, with approximately 82% increases in empathy scores, 35% in emotional intelligence, and 20% in aesthetic satisfaction. These results indicate that literature is an effective tool for language teaching and contributes to students' holistic development in other aspects of life.

Keywords: children's literature; emotional intelligence; language development; teaching literature

INTRODUCTION

In this fast-paced digital age, people may be tempted to downplay the importance of classical literature, especially poetry, in our education. However, many studies have shown the great impact...
of using literary works in improving education. As it turns out, literature has tremendous potential in improving students' communication skills, which is very important in today's modern world.

Communication is a pillar of every human interaction and personal development. An urgency emerges in the current circumstance that education has to create a more empathic generation who can express the students' ideas and emotions clearly and has social skills, then an investment in research that focuses on literature as a teaching tool. Specifically, in the study of the implementation of literature in teaching, teaching literature enhances communication skills by building experience, creating thinking abilities, and pleasuring readers while helping students learn new vocabulary and literary terms (Ilankumaran & Deepa, 2018).

Teaching literature cannot always be done easily, such as teaching the social contract tradition to undergraduate students can be frustrating. Students may find the writing style of Hobbes, Locke, or Rousseau fusty, while critical concepts such as the state of nature or tacit consent may seem arcane, abstract, or irrelevant (Kirkpatrick, 2021). There is a need for simplification before using literary works in a teaching and learning process to achieve the goal of education.

The stories were read and written influencing who they will be in the future. It needs to do more than change school reading lists or provide teachers with ready-made teaching resources if we are to create significant change in the high school years. Also, stories that are read or written can encourage changes in the morals and values possessed by students. This is done by reading with others; the process of sharing this information can change the quality of moral perception and imagination in literary study (Collin, 2021).

In the form of structuralist studies, literature has a big impact when viewed from its implementation in teaching. It is seen from the effective approach to teaching the literature has been formalist and takes into account fidelity to the nature and function of literature, even as it reveals the universal in the particular that makes the form and content of Canadian literature relevant to Kenyan as well as to African experiences (Kiiru, 2020).

Looking back during the pandemic strikes, it affects education significantly. Academics and students have had to respond to the unexpected and unplanned shift from face-to-face to online teaching. This brings new experience in teaching and learning on online platform. It has prompted the English Language and Literature Department academics at Çankaya University to seek alternative and creative ideas to promote student productivity, participation, and motivation (Üstündağ Güvenç et al., 2022).

This encourages various academic circles to see the specificity of literature in teaching. Literature can be employed as a material for both explicit and implicit teaching. Literature has long been used in teaching English as a resource providing both motivating and authentic content (Hosseini & Pourghasemian, 2019). Also, it was found that most students were highly motivated in the learning process and felt more confident about reading literature due to some features in the system, such as 'self-paced learning, proper content arrangement, self-access learning, and user-'friendliness' (Chang, 2021). Another innovation offered by a literature study is the inclusion of a museum as a vehicle for recognizing literature in the past. This literary museum can make literature a way to understand the past. On the other hand, by narrowing literature to patterns, ideas, and emotions and addressing current issues and cultural phenomena, literary linguistic centers can get new groups of young audiences to relate to the literature (Sandmark, 2020).
From the various previous research above, integrating literature into language education offers a variety of significant benefits. One of the immediate advantages is vocabulary expansion; literary works often contain rich and symbolic language, which provides context that facilitates understanding and retention of new words and phrases. This benefit is crucial in language classes, where diverse vocabulary and nuances of language play an important role in effective communication. In addition, literature with its multi-genres is an extraordinary vessel for exploring ideas, morals, ethics, and values, all of which affect critical thinking skills. In the context of poetry, multi-faceted interpretation forces us to consider multiple perspectives, sharpening our abilities for argument and analysis.

In another perspective, the benefits of literature are not only cognitive; it also has an emotional and psychological impact. Literature allows us to 'feel' through words, facilitating the development of empathy and emotional intelligence skills often underemphasized in formal education but essential in real life. On the creative side, the poem's pattern, with its rhythm and rhyme, serves as a mechanism that attracts students' attention and motivation, enabling them to engage more deeply in the learning process.

Thus, the above explanation shows the urgency to implement literature in teaching to develop a communicative, critical, empathetic, and creative generation. Investment in literature as a teaching tool is reasonable and urgent. This research provides a strong academic foundation and has the potential to open up opportunities for further innovation in literary education. In a world where communication is central to all aspects of human interaction and personal development, literature offers a very effective tool for achieving more holistic educational goals.

This research is more specific in raising issues regarding the use of literary works in the teaching and learning process. Seeing the development of literature, which occurs separately from the world of education and literary works, which are only interpreted as entertainment, it is felt necessary to promote literature in learning and also efforts to improve language skills.

The research questions of this research can be formulated as follows:

1. How does the teaching literature affect English learning proficiency?
2. How does the teaching literature on empathy, emotional intelligence, and aesthetic satisfaction affect the student's learning process?

The research questions above are hoped to bring this research to specifically reveal how a literary work can influence students' English language skills. It is hoped that this research will also be able to reveal how teaching literature can influence empathy, emotional intelligence, and aesthetic satisfaction. This is achieved through integrating literature, and this research aims to make English education more holistic, covering language skills, critical thinking, empathy, and creativity.

English language education has long placed a focus on structure and grammar. However, the statistics from 'students' final exams of English grammar courses also show that traditional grammar teaching has no positive influence on the English grammar ability of college students (Zhou, 2018). Literature as an effective teaching tool is often not fully utilized. Recent research demonstrates a paradigm shift in this approach by incorporating literature into the English language teaching methodology (Alemi, 2011; Chalikendy, 2015; Teranishi et al., 2012). The reason these changes are revolutionary is because these new teaching methods accommodate the specific needs of students.
Fundamentally, as stated for the first time by McKay (1982), the initial stages that must be passed must include selecting works that can promote aesthetic interactions between the reader and the text. Therefore, research involving literature and its teaching should begin with a needs analysis, which identifies the types of literary works that suit students’ interests and level of expertise. This is important because, as explained, personalizing materials according to students’ needs is more effective than a one-size-fits-all approach to English education.

Things that might be explained more about the use of works that do not suit the abilities or needs of students might result in a condition in which literary appreciation skills and reading performance of university students in literature reveal a moderate level of skill in literary appreciation but low skill in recognizing author's point of view, judging the text, recognizing personal philosophy, and relating stories to personal lives, and proposes 29 innovative learning tasks for literature classes. (Magulod, 2018). By first going through the need analysis stages of students, measuring and assessing their abilities at the outset towards a literary work, it will make it easier to bridge the expected increase in language skills.

Furthermore, it is important to formulate clear teaching objectives, from improving communication skills to deepening cultural and historical understanding. According to a study by Hematian (Hematian et al., 2016, goal-setting teaching significantly affected the improvement of self-directed learning and achievement motivation.

Another thing that needs to be considered while implementing this literature-based learning is a series of innovative teaching techniques. This has a significant impact because interactive and dynamic teaching of literature facilitates various learning activities, not just reading texts. Also, innovative teaching techniques generally improve thinking skills, overall well-being, and academic performance, while preparing students for future technological advances and workplace demands (Narayanan, 2018; Qi, 2021; Subramani & Iyappan, 2018).

In addition, emotional satisfaction and aesthetic factors also play an important role in the learning process. In this context, intelligence plays a significant role in learning outcomes, satisfaction with learning experiences, and the development of effective learning strategies (Alconero-Camarero et al., 2018; Shafait et al., 2021). On the other hand, aesthetics plays an important role in learning by fostering motivation, enhancing aesthetic sensitivity, and influencing emotions and judgments (Kusumawardani, 2019; Sarasso et al., 2020).

METHOD

This is a mixed-method research, where data were obtained quantitatively and qualitatively. In the early stages, the research team used a qualitative approach and continued with a quantitative approach to the treatment. The research team used a pre-experimental design to study the effectiveness of teaching literature in improving English proficiency. This research was conducted from July to August 2023. Before starting the research, a needs analysis was conducted on the 28 students. Those 28 students were the representation of the schools located in Merauke, South Papua. This analysis includes evaluating students' reading literacy, reading interest, and aesthetic interactions in the context of literary works. Based on this information, the researchers then formulated learning objectives to improve students' English proficiency, particularly in vocabulary, grammatical understanding, and communication skills.
The data in this research was obtained through several stages, the first being an analysis of the needs of students. In this analysis of the needs given, the researcher identified learning objectives that were formulated based on students' interest in literary works. Need analysis was carried out in two initial ways, namely distributing a questionnaire containing 14 items mapped into 3 clusters, namely, Genre, Conflict, and Reading Experience. Next, interviews are conducted to confirm and strengthen the initial preliminary before treatment is given.

Furthermore, after the needs analysis was carried out, the student group was given treatment according to the Pre-Experimental procedure flow, where the group was given a pre-test and also a post-test to see the improvement that occurred in the linguistic aspects determined at the beginning of the research, namely Grammatical Comprehension, Vocabulary, and Speaking Skills. This research is a simple initiation to get an initial picture of the relationship between literary works and students' linguistic abilities, so there is no more complex testing or investigation of linguistic elements.

Procedurally, during the treatment phase, several innovative teaching techniques were tailored to the needs and interests of students. Some included small group discussions, analysis of characters in literature, and activities to compare translations of the same literary work. These techniques were expected to facilitate deeper and meaningful learning while allowing students to explore literary works from multiple perspectives. On treatment, we selected literary works that best suit the needs and interests of students, as identified in the needs analysis. Students were then given a series of tasks and activities designed to maximize their interaction with the text and, in doing so, deepen their understanding of language and literary elements.

After completing the treatment phase, there were several measurement mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention. This phase includes language tests that cover aspects such as vocabulary and grammatical comprehension, as well as surveys and other measurement tools designed to assess improvements in emotional abilities and aesthetic satisfaction. The results show significant improvement in all areas measured, validating the effectiveness of the literature-teaching approach in improving English proficiency and other aspects of emotional intelligence and aesthetic satisfaction.

After all the data was collected, the data was then mapped by the group; the first was qualitative data obtained from interviews with students involved in this research. This interview data is divided into two, namely data from the pre-condition, where the results of this interview refer to needs analysis, and also interview data taken after treatment to see the differences in students’ impressions before and after treatment. The second is quantitative data obtained from initial measurements before treatment and also after treatment is given. This research is simple research that only looks at the conditions when the language learning process is intervened with literary works as the main focus media so the analysis carried out only looks at the gaps at the beginning and also after the treatment is given.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings show very promising results. According to the initial needs analysis, which includes reading literacy, reading interest, and aesthetic interaction with literature, teaching strategies, and teaching materials are directed to meet the specific needs of the participants. In the initial interviews conducted in the need analysis stage, students had a high interest and enthusiasm for reading, especially in children's literature. This can be seen from the responses and responses of students who like literary works that have visualizations that are easier to interpret. This easy definition supports
the assumption that 'children's literature is one of the media that parents and teachers can use to help children develop cultural and character values (Murwaningsih et al., 2022). In contrast to other genres of literary works such as poetry and novels which tend to be boring for students.

In the next dimension, the need analysis was carried out, namely reading literacy, the researchers found that there was still minimal input provided by parents when students were at home which resulted in low student reading literacy. The low literacy of these students greatly impacts word reading fluency. This did not directly affect meaning, it only slowed down the reading process itself, but had a big impact on mastery of language skills whereas low reading literacy had an impact on students' low mastery of vocabulary.

In determining the teaching strategies that were students' learning needs, the researchers offered several learning strategies to students, including: gradual teaching, exemplification, discussion, comprehension checking, and cooperative learning. Of the offers given, more students chose to do cooperative learning. This was based on initial assumptions where most of them felt that they did not want to do anything different than before. This still needs further evidence regarding whether the habituation of learning strategies affects the orientation of students in choosing the teaching strategies they receive in class.

In the end, the researchers agreed to implement teaching children's literature using a cooperative learning approach. Treatment begins with giving a pre-test, then continues with giving treatment to the group you want to affect, and then ends with a post-test. The pre-test and post-test results data from the given children's literature learning were as follows:

![Figure 1 Language Improvement Graph](image)

Based on Figure 1, statistically, the improvement in English proficiency was significant. From the pre-test to the post-test, the average increase in vocabulary was 18%. This can be seen from the initial conditions where the average student score was only at number 75. After the treatment was given, the post-test results showed that the average student score was 88.5. This figure was the highest number and the biggest increase seen after children's literature was given as a medium of learning in teaching literature. In the aspect of grammatical comprehension, there was an increase of 15% (72 to 82.8). From the initial average value of 72, it can be seen that this aspect was the aspect that students lacked the most in language learning. In the final post-test results, the average score that was successfully obtained by students was 82.8. This final average score was the lowest average score compared to the other two linguistic aspects measured in this study. Speaking skills was the most moderate aspect in
this study, meaning that it had not experienced a significant increase, nor was it the lowest. There was a 12% increase in the use of proper grammar and pronunciation. This can be seen from the initial average obtained by students of 74 and the final average obtained by students after treatment of 83. This aspect of speaking is measured by looking at students’ responses to the children's literature given, and asking them to respond in English.

There were also important improvements in emotional skills and emotional intelligence. The results of the emotional questionnaire filled out by students showed that around 82% or as many as 23 of 28 students felt more empathetic and better able to understand other people's points of view after interacting with characters in literature. In addition, the level of students' aesthetic satisfaction in displaying literary works increased by around 20%, indicating that they not only understand but also enjoy the learning process, it was still considered quite low because of that there needs to be further investigation regarding how this aesthetic satisfaction can be further improved. From the two main findings regarding the increase in emotional abilities, it can be seen that teaching literature has a greater impact on instilling empathy values in students than instilling aesthetic values.

Based on the findings of this research, it can be seen that there has been an increase in the linguistic aspect; however, in post-research observations and interviews, it turns out that the dominance of the value of literary works is still the main component that emerges when literary works are applied as learning media. In this section, the researcher sees two main points that have been successfully promoted in teaching literature. First, stories in literary works are always oriented toward cultivating the value of empathy and emotional intelligence in students. The students when faced with a literary work; even though the learning orientation is on language learning, the work will be more focused on the engagement feelings that arise in students as readers; this causes the dominance of values in literary works to bring more significant changes in students. Second, in line with the exclusivity that a literary work has in the first finding, it is necessary to look at literature teaching from a different pedagogical perspective.

In implementing learning during treatment, we see conditions where students ultimately interpret literary works critically by interpreting the values contained in the work. Teachers in the context of teaching literature ultimately develop the values and ideas contained in literary works, asking students to respond in English regarding how they interpret the work.

Overall, the findings from this research show that teaching literature in a foreign language will ultimately focus on how the work is interpreted. In the meaning of literary works, changes may occur but not predominantly in linguistic abilities, so this pedagogical alternative that focuses on teaching literature will have the potential for optimal application in learning in subsequent investigations.

**Teaching Literature on Empathy, Emotional Intelligence, and Aesthetic Satisfaction**

Fundamentally, teaching literature occupied an important space in the language syllabus as literature was pedagogically, linguistically, and aesthetically embedded (Regmi, 2022). These research findings brought us to a discussion of how literature can function as an effective pedagogical tool in the context of English language education. Apart from the main focus on structure and grammar in the traditional curriculum, these findings suggest that literature offers a holistic approach that also includes other critical elements such as empathy, emotional intelligence, and aesthetic satisfaction.

During the usage of Children's literature, it played a crucial role in education, providing knowledge and entertainment, and from a pedagogic point of view, tales convey basic values useful for children's
lives, which can promote their holistic development and well-being (Pulimeno et al., 2020). In this study, the framework presented was novelty through the results from our questionnaire and emotional observation that showed students who follow the literature curriculum showed significant increases in critical elements such as empathy, emotional intelligence, and aesthetic satisfaction.

For example, in narrative analysis, students were taught to enter the world of the characters and understand their conflicts and motivations. This, in turn, trained them to be more empathetic in the real world. The data showed an 82% increase in empathy scores on the post-study questionnaire. The ability to perceive and understand how others were feeling was a key part of emotional intelligence, and it helped not only in social life but also in effective communication in any language.

Specifically, in the context of learning, the ability to understand other people's emotions—part of emotional intelligence—was a valuable asset. For example, in a classroom, an empathic teacher can more effectively detect student discomfort or confusion and thereby provide timely assistance or explanations. In the use of Teaching Literature, an empathic teacher can utilize this ability to identify the emotional nuances that students might feel when reading or analyzing a work. What was represented in the classroom was that Literature often explores complex emotions and situations, and some students may find it difficult or even awkward to express their interpretations or reactions. It opened the opportunity for teachers who can "read" students' emotions since they can open up space for more in-depth and empathetic discussions.

In our assumption, teachers can recognize that there was confusion or discomfort when discussing sensitive or complex themes, such as racism in a novel, the teacher can design ways of discussion that pay attention to students' emotional sensitivity. This could be providing a wider cultural context, asking questions that promote critical thinking without causing defensiveness, or even facilitating small group discussions to allow students to feel more comfortable speaking.

It was also seen during the implementation that when the teacher feels students' enthusiasm and emotional engagement with a story or character, it can be a starting point for a more analytic discussion. For example, understanding why a particular character or moment in a literary work evokes an emotional reaction can be a way to understand literary elements such as characterization, plot, or symbolism. Overall, the emotional sensitivity of a teacher in the context of teaching literature not only makes the material more accessible but also opens the door to a more holistic and emotional type of learning, which can ultimately deepen students' understanding and appreciation of literature.

This can have a positive impact on learning outcomes and student satisfaction. Students can also support each other; those who can "read" their friends' emotions are more likely to offer support or help when their friends are having a hard time. In addition, this ability is also influential in discussions or group work. Understanding the emotions of group members can help in distributing tasks more effectively, resolving conflicts, or even giving constructive criticism without hurting other people's feelings.

Beyond that, emotional intelligence also played a role in learning a foreign language. Knowing how to capture the emotions and nuances of a foreign language helped not only in mastering grammar or vocabulary but also in understanding the cultural and social context of the language. In other words, understanding emotions can help students do more than just "understand" the material; it allows them to "feel it," which in turn makes learning more immersive and memorable.
Regarding emotional intelligence, the process and appreciation of literature force students to deal with complex emotional or psychological concepts, such as internal conflict, ethics, and morality. This helps them understand and manage their own emotions and those of others more effectively. Interestingly, there was a 35% increase in students' ability to detect and manage emotions based on our emotional intelligence test.

Teaching Literature: Teaching Technique Implementation

It was proven that Literature not only taught English but also opened social and cultural insights that were very useful in developing more comprehensive communication skills. In other words, literature facilitated deeper language learning, which included understanding contextual and emotional nuances, as well as the technical aspects of language itself.

During the use of the literature in the classroom, when asking the students to read a literary work, they interact not only with the words and sentence structure but also with the context in which the words were used. It helped them to understand the nuances and emotions it embodied, which were rich in culture and symbolism. For example, reading a story that came from a specific region of society will enrich them with an understanding of social norms, values, and even communication etiquette in that country. Furthermore, literature taught empathy and emotional awareness. The characters and the dynamics of interrelationships in stories help them identify and understand the emotions, motivations, and actions of other people in real life. This was invaluable in enriching students' communication skills, making them not only proficient in the technical aspects of language but also in interpreting and responding to the social and emotional context around it. Therefore, literature facilitated deeper language learning, which included understanding the contextual and emotional nuances, as well as the technical aspects of language itself.

Regarding the implementation of teaching techniques, innovative strategies such as Analysis Techniques, Memorizing and Generating Techniques, Solving Techniques, Constructing Techniques, and Transformation Techniques have proven to be effective in facilitating this learning process. These techniques allow students to interact with literary texts more dynamically, making them more than just reading but a platform for discussion, analysis, and self-expression.

It was found that the innovative approach was very influential in facilitating a more effective and comprehensive learning process. By using analysis techniques, students are taught to analyze local folk tales such as "Malin Kundang" to understand themes such as respect for parents. This facilitates a deeper discussion of cultural and ethical values.

Memorizing and Generating Techniques were also very effective; students were asked to memorize traditional nursery rhymes or poems and then created their versions. This not only helped them understand the structure of language but also stimulated their imagination and creativity, whereas Solving Techniques were often used in the context of stories with problems or conflicts that needed to be solved. For example, students can be given the task of finding a solution to the conflict between the characters in the story "The Kancil and the Crocodile," spurring them to think critically and empathize. In the Constructing Techniques strategy, students were asked to create their own stories using elements from existing stories. In this treatment students after reading "Sangkuriang," the students were asked to write a modern version of the story, with a more contemporary setting and characters. Finally, the Transformation Techniques allow students to adapt stories to different formats. A fictional example of this could be transforming the story "Roro Jonggrang" into a comic
or stage play. These strategies have proven effective in increasing students' understanding of their local literature, as well as helping them develop more comprehensive communication skills.

This study supported the assumptions that Critical Literature Pedagogy may become a standard approach in the teaching of literature in EFL settings that promoted literary analyses that were closer to the 'learners' milieu' (Afifuddin & Kadarisman, 2020). These findings also have the potential to overhaul the existing paradigm of English education. Instead of focusing exclusively on the technical aspects of language, there was an urgency to integrate literature education as part of the curriculum. This will enrich teaching and learning methods.

Overall as the researchers see the elaboration on the literature and the teaching strategies, it can be assumed that Critical Literature Pedagogy has the potential to become a standardized approach to teaching literature in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) environments. One of the strengths of this approach was its focus on analyzing literature that was closer to the 'milieu' or the socio-cultural environment of the students. Rather than just guiding them through technical aspects of literature—such as narrative structure, characterization, or themes—this approach also helped them relate the material to their real lives, social conditions, and relevant cultural issues.

For example, when discussing a piece of literature that focuses on gender or racial issues, the Critical Literature Pedagogy encourages students to explore how these issues affect them personally or their community as a whole. This not only made the material more relevant but also improved students' analytical and critical abilities in interpreting texts. It also allowed them to better appreciate the nuances and complexities of language and literature, which is of course invaluable in EFL learning.

This approach also offered the possibility to bring local and global contexts into the analysis, thereby facilitating a deeper understanding of how literature can function as a tool for social change or cultural understanding. Therefore, it can be predicted that Critical Literature Pedagogy will be increasingly accepted as a standard methodology, especially in the EFL context, because of its effectiveness in linking literature analysis to the realities of students' lives.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study provide an overview of the improvement of students' language skills. It showed an improvement in students’ language proficiency that was measured in Grammatical Comprehension, vocabulary and Speaking Skills. More than that, this research is also able to provide an overview of the practical advantages of teaching literature specifically on how the students respond and take the benefit more on the moral value, conflict, and characterization in a literary work. It is easy for any researcher to assume that students will experience an increase in their language skills through literary works. This research proves critically that there is an increase in emotional well-being in terms of empathy, emotional intelligence, and aesthetic satisfaction. The practice of class implementation becomes more diverse and colorful with various advantages possessed by literature. Teachers can be more capable of providing innovation in the implementation of teaching techniques by elaborating them on a literary work. The research is far from perfect since the limitation on the subject and many other things that may create the barrier to discovering more about the literary works and how it affects language proficiency, but this shows a big chance for further research to deeply investigate the language skills, and aspects that may be affected by the implementation of the literary works during students language learning.
REFERENCES


