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INCREASING STUDENTS READING SKILL USING LITERATURE: CLASSROOM ACTION RESEARCH AT MAN 1 PROBOLINGGO

Abstrak
Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menggunakan karya sastra sebagai alat pembelajaran untuk meningkatkan kemampuan membaca siswa di MAN 1 Probolinggo. Untuk mencapai tujuan ini, digunakan metode Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (PTK) dua siklus. Tahap perencanaan, tindakan, observasi, dan refleksi adalah komponennya. Penelitian melibatkan dua belas siswa yang belajar bahasa di kelas XII, dan hasilnya menunjukkan peningkatan yang signifikan dalam kemampuan membaca mereka. Meskipun sebagian besar siswa belum mencapai KKM 75, hampir semua siswa melampaui KKM pada tes setelahnya, dan enam dari mereka memperoleh nilai sempurna. Pembelajaran berbasis karya sastra juga meningkatkan keterlibatan, minat, dan apresiasi siswa terhadap membaca.
Kata kunci: Karya Sastra, Kemampuan Membaca, Pembelajaran, PTK

Abstract
The purpose of this study was to use literary works as a learning tool to improve the reading skills of students at MAN 1 Probolinggo. A two-cycle classroom action research (CAR) was used. The stages of planning, action, observation, and reflection were its components. The study involved twelve students studying language in grade XII, and the results showed a significant improvement in their reading skills. Although most students did not achieve the minimum passing grade of 75, almost all students exceeded the minimum passing grade on the subsequent test, and six of them received perfect scores. Literature-based learning also increased student engagement, interest, and appreciation for reading.
Keywords: Literary Works, Reading Skills, Learning, Action Research

INTRODUCTION

Reading ability is one of the most basic language skills that is very important in mastering English as a foreign language. By reading, students can increase their knowledge, hone their critical thinking skills, and understand the cultural context of the language being learned. Unfortunately, the reading ability of students in many secondary schools in Indonesia, including MAN 1 Probolinggo, is still relatively low. Initial observations show that many students have difficulty grasping the main ideas of a text, interpreting implied meanings, and connecting the content of the reading material to their personal experiences. In addition, interest in reading English texts is still very low, as students prefer translated texts or practice questions that are purely cognitive in nature, without any meaningful context.

In the field of English as a foreign language (EFL) learning, reading activities are more than just a way to obtain information; they are also a process of creating meaning that involves a relationship between the reader and the text. Therefore, effective reading instruction should not only focus on direct comprehension, but also include the ability to interpret and think critically. One method that supports this is literature-based learning, as it can connect the emotional, cultural, and intellectual elements of students simultaneously (Kaowiwattanakul, 2021). Through literary works such as short stories, poems, and novels, students not only learn the content of the text, but also understand language analysis, interpret deeper meanings, and develop empathy and appreciation for life values.

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In addition, according to (Iswahyudi et al., 2024), applying literary teaching materials in secondary education can support overall language development, especially by improving reading comprehension, increasing vocabulary, and improving cultural literacy. Furthermore, literary works provide an understanding of authentic and contextual language use, which is often not found in conventional textbooks.

Putri and Nurkhamidah state that this low reading ability is caused by teaching methods that are still too focused on translating texts and answering questions literally, without providing opportunities to explore the meaning and interpretation of texts (Putri & Nurkhamidah, 2023). Azwar, Ristiyanti, also state that the process of learning to read must be supported by strategies that can activate students' existing knowledge and encourage them to think critically about the text (Azwar et al., 2024). Therefore, innovation is needed in reading teaching methods that are not only related to test results but also capable of developing a deep understanding and appreciation of the text.

One suitable method to apply is to utilize literature-based learning in the context of Classroom Action Research (CAR). This method uses literary works such as short stories, poems, or simple novels as the main medium in reading activities. Through literary works, students are not only taught to understand texts, but also to develop empathy, imagination, and reflection on life values (Durak & Yavuz, 2024).

With this method, it is hoped that students' reading skills will develop in a balanced and meaningful way because they not only understand the text but also learn to think critically, empathize, and relate what they read to real-world situations. Therefore, it is hoped that the application of literature-based learning within the framework of this action research will make a significant contribution to improving the quality of English language learning in secondary schools at MAN 1 Probolinggo and strengthening the culture of literacy.

The main issue in this study is how to improve students' reading skills through literature-based learning at MAN 1 Probolinggo. Based on this issue, the objectives of this study are: (1) to describe the initial condition of students' reading skills; (2) to implement a literature-based learning model using a classroom action research design; and (3) to analyze the improvement in students' reading skills after the model is implemented.

According to Mustopa and Sugirin reading skills will improve if the learning process is designed with consideration for the development of critical thinking skills and the context of the text's meaning (Mustopa & Sugirin, 2020). Several previous studies have also shown the effectiveness of using literature to improve reading skills. Durak and Yavuz found that the use of authentic literary texts in English as a foreign language classes can improve students' reading strategies, including skimming, scanning, and guessing meaning from context (Durak & Yavuz, 2024).

By integrating the potential of literature and thinking about classroom practices, this study is expected to present an efficient teaching model to improve the reading skills of students at MAN 1 Probolinggo. The role of the teacher is as a guide and researcher in developing a learning cycle that is sensitive to student needs. Each cycle of action will be aimed at improving the ability to understand main ideas, inferences, vocabulary, and interpretation of values in literary texts.

Basic comprehension relates to the literal meaning of the text, inference involves interpretation and connections between ideas, while evaluation focuses on assessing the content of the text. Through literary works, these three elements can develop synergistically because students are exposed to complex meanings, unique styles of language, and themes that encourage critical thinking.

The results of this study are expected to not only improve students' reading skills but also enhance the culture of literacy in the school environment. For teachers, the results can serve as examples of reflective practices to improve the way English is taught directly in the classroom. For schools, the results are expected to form the basis for developing sustainable English literacy programs.

METHOD

Using Classroom Action Research (CAR), this study aims to improve students' reading skills through the application of literature-based learning. This method was chosen because it is reflective, cooperative, and focused on improving teaching methods in the classroom.

According to Utami and Mahardika, literature-based language learning allows students to interact more deeply with texts, understand cultural contexts, and learn to think critically through reading activities (Utami & Mahardika, 2023). Therefore, this strategy is relevant for improving students' reading skills in madrasah aliyah.

This study was conducted in two cycles, each comprising four main stages: Planning: creating literary teaching materials (short stories, poems, or novel excerpts), lesson plans, and observation tools. Action: using a literature group model and discussions to conduct literature-based reading learning activities. Observation: observing student activities, engagement, and text comprehension abilities. Reflection: evaluating the results of the action, assessing the effectiveness of the method, and determining improvements for the next cycle.

This study involved all students at MAN 1 Probolinggo in the 2024/2025 academic year. Based on preliminary observations and semester exam scores, the research sample was selected purposively, namely one 12th grade language class with below-average reading skills.

To enhance the credibility of the research results, triangulation was used to collect data for this study (Dewi, n.d.). These techniques included: Students' reading abilities were assessed through tests conducted before and after the intervention. Comprehension of main ideas, inference of meaning, contextual vocabulary, and interpretation of text content were the assessment indicators for multiple-choice and short essay questions.

According to Lestari and Rahmi using literary texts in reading tests can increase language appreciation and assess students' interpretive abilities (Lestari & Rahmi, n.d.). During the learning process, observations were made to record student and teacher activities. The observation sheet covered aspects of student participation, reading strategies, and group work. The researchers and collaborating teachers conducted these observations.

Field notes were used to record student responses and classroom dynamics during the learning process. Teacher reflection journals helped evaluate results and plan improvements. Interviews were conducted with teachers and students to ascertain their perceptions of literature learning and reading skill development. The interview results supported the quantitative findings and formed the basis for reflection on future actions.

The research instrument was developed in four stages. First, the question grid was created based on reading skill indicators; second, the content was validated by two experts and English teachers; third, reliability was tested using the KR-20 formula; and fourth, revisions were made based on the validation results.

In this study, two methods were used to analyze the data: quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis. To describe the significance of the increase in learning outcomes, the pre-test and post-test data were analyzed descriptively using the mean, learning completeness percentage, and gain score. If necessary, a paired sample t-test was used.

If the action meets the following requirements, it is considered successful: At least 75% of students achieve a score higher than the minimum passing grade (70). From the pre-test to the post-test, the average reading score increases by at least 20%. The results of the observation show that students are more active in literary discussions, understand the text better, and comprehend it more. In their research on improving reading skills in junior high school, Lestari and Rahami used the CAR evaluation guidelines (Lestari & Rahmi, n.d.).

After obtaining permission from the principal and English teacher of MAN 1 Probolinggo, the research began. Students were informed that their identities would be protected and that the data would be used for academic purposes. According to Utami and, this ethical principle is in line with classroom action research guidelines Mahardiaka (Utami & Mahardika, 2023).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Pre-Test Results

Twelve students took the pre-test, with individual scores of Anisa 60, Melynia 30, Fajar 40, Mukhlis 40, Raifni 60, Riviansyah 30, Nabilatul 40, Sofa 70, Desi 100, Zalika 20, Alfan 100, and Umi Kulsum 90.

NO	Jumlah Siswa	Score	Keterangan
1.	3	20-30	Far below the minimum passing grade
2.	5	40-60	Below the minimum passing grade
3.	1	70	Approaching the minimum passing grade
4.	3	90-100	Exceeding the minimum passing grade
Total		12 Students	

Average (Mean): 56.67
Students who achieved ≥ 75 (minimum passing grade): 3 / 12 (25%)
Description:
Initial test results show that most students scored below the minimum passing grade (75). Nine students (75%) did not reach the target, while three students achieved or exceeded it. This indicates that students' initial reading comprehension skills are relatively low. Similar findings were also reported by (Azwar et al., 2024), who noted that the low initial comprehension of students was due to traditional teacher-centered teaching methods, which failed to engage students in a meaningful way.

2. Post Test Results

The final exam for the same students showed individual results:
Raifni 100, Mukhlisatul Amalia 100, Zalika 100, Nabilatul 100, Desi 100, Meliana 100, Alfan 100, Umi Kulsum 100, Anisatul 90, Fajar 100, Riviansyah 100, Sofa 100.

No	Jumlah Siswa	Score	Keterangan
1.	1	90	Above minimum passing grade
2.	11	100	Perfect Score
Total		12 Students	

Average (Mean): 99.17
Students who achieved ≥ 75 (minimum passing score): 12 / 12 (100%)
Description:
All students achieved scores that met or exceeded the minimum passing score. The average score increased by 42.5 points, from 56.67 (initial test) to 99.17 (final test). The average N-Gain = 0.81, indicating a significant improvement.

These results clearly show that literature-based teaching substantially improves students' reading comprehension. This is in line with the findings of Mardiani and Baharuddin which reveal that literature-based EFL teaching stimulates linguistic awareness and cultural understanding while improving comprehension skills (Mardiani & Baharuddin, 2023),.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that the use of literary texts as learning materials in the CAR cycle contributes to significant progress in students' reading abilities. These findings are in line with recent studies indicating that literary materials offer a rich linguistic context, which helps students understand implicit meanings and increases their enthusiasm and emotional engagement—factors that influence reading comprehension (Mardiani & Baharuddin, 2023); "Literature-based EFL Instruction"). Similar CAR results have also been reported in several

studies in Indonesia, which found an increase in scores and motivation after interventions based on literature or literature circles.

Explanation of the mechanism: literary works often encourage readers to draw conclusions, relate their experiences to the content of the work, and understand the nuances of language—these cognitive and emotional activities contribute to the ability to understand texts beyond mere routine exercises. This can be seen from the significant increase in N-gain (0.81) in this study, which shows that learning truly changes the way students understand the material, not just superficially improving their scores. Similar findings were also presented by Azwar et al. and research on literary circles/DRTA in the local context that applied the CAR methodology (Azwar et al., 2024).

The interventions were implemented in the following order: before reading (activating schemas), during reading (guided instruction, literary circle discussions), and after reading (reflective assignments, drama, or responsive writing). This structured approach has been proven effective in other studies: activating students' schemas before reading reduces vocabulary and context barriers; group discussions during reading improve metacognitive strategies; post-reading tasks strengthen understanding and memory (Dewi, n.d.); In this study, these stages were found to contribute significantly to achieving very high post-test scores.

The results show that the CAR approach (planning-action-observation-reflection cycle) enables educators or researchers to gradually improve teaching strategies based on student responses, resulting in significant progress in each cycle. This is in line with research that highlights the success of CAR for direct and relevant learning interventions in school settings (Cindy & Hutapea, 2025).

The consistent improvement across all students confirms that the literature-based learning strategy has promoted significant academic development. The significant improvement between pre- and post-test results shows that the literature-based approach within the CAR framework has successfully improved students' reading comprehension. The active use of literary texts—such as short stories, poems, or novel excerpts—provides authentic and emotionally engaging content that stimulates linguistic and interpretive skills.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings from classroom action research conducted at MAN 1 Probolinggo, it can be concluded that the use of literature-based learning can significantly improve students' reading skills. The results of the pre-test showed that the majority of students had not achieved the minimum passing score, with an average of 56.67. After implementing the literature-based learning method through several action cycles, the post-test score increased to 99.17, and all students achieved or exceeded the minimum passing score.

In addition to improving their academic scores, students also showed positive changes in their attitudes and motivation to learn. They became more active, enthusiastic, and interested in reading activities because literary texts provided a more meaningful and relevant learning experience. This learning method not only helped students understand the content of the reading material, but also developed their critical thinking and empathy skills, as well as imparting the values contained in the texts.

Thus, it can be concluded that literature-focused learning is very effective in improving reading skills while building a culture of literacy in the school environment. This approach can serve as an alternative for English teachers to create a more creative, interactive, and enjoyable learning atmosphere.

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