USING FILMS AS MEDIA TO TEACH LITERATURE

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Abstract: The objectives of the study are to find out: 1) whether or not there is a significant difference on students’ achievement between those who are taught by using films and those who are assigned to read the novels and short story. 2) students’ opinions on the implementation of using movie as a media to teach literature. This is a pre-experimental design, a non equivalent group posttest-only design, where eighty students were divided equally into two groups, control and experimental groups and both groups were not given pretest. The research was done in seven meeting including the posttest from 10 March to 28 April 2014. The result of this research showed that there was a significant difference on students’ achievement between the two groups since the t-obtained on the independent sample t-test was 6.734 with significance of 0.000. The students also showed a positive response on the implementation of this media to teach literature.

Keywords: Films, Literature

Introduction
Literature is a term used to describe written or spoken material. Based on Kakonis and Evans (1971: 139), “Literature is an art form, like painting, sculpture, music, drama, and the dance. Literature is distinguished from other arts form by the medium in which it works; language”. And other opinions literature is referred to as the entirety of written expression, with the restriction that not every written document can be categorized as literature in the more exact sense of the word. The definitions, therefore, usually include additional adjectives such as “aesthetic” or “artistic” to distinguish literary works from texts of everyday use such as telephone books, newspapers, legal documents, and scholarly writings (Klarer, 2005). Literature is also perceived as a difficult subject to score in, compared to the other humanities, and many students base their decision to take the subject on whether they think they can do well in it (Choo, 2006).

Why should we study literature? According to Hake (2001), there are at least two reasons why we study literature. First, literature is fun and delightful. One of the basic purposes of literature has always been to entertain, and anything that is genuinely entertaining has value. The other answer is that literature teaches us many things. It not only delights, it instructs. It can wake up our senses, enrich our feelings, and deepen our thoughts by showing us the basic building blocks, ultimate context and shape in time of human experience.

Teaching literature is a subject, and a difficult one. Doing it well requires scholarly and critical sophistication, but it also requires a clear idea of what literature is, of what is entailed in reading and characterizing. It requires, in fact, some very self-conscious theorizing (Chambers and Gregory, 2006). Teaching literature should give priority to the appreciative activity than the knowledge of literature itself because the main purpose of teaching and learning literature is appreciate the value that contains in literature (Rusyana, 1982).

Literature was born by the human urge to express himself on the subject of human beings, humanity, and the universe (Semi, 1993 cited in Wahyudi, 2013)). Literature is the expression of life issues, philosophy, and psychology. Poets can be said to be a psychologist and a philosophy that expresses life's problems, psychology, and philosophy, not by express through literature writing techniques. Differences of letters lies in the literary sensibility that can penetrate human ultimate truth cannot be known to others. Beside literature is a work of art that has the intellect, imagination, and emotions, it is also a creative work that is used as an intellectual and emotional consumption. Literatures that have been born by writers are expected to provide intellectual and aesthetic satisfaction for the reader (Spring, 1993 cited in Wahyudi, 2013).

Referring to the literature on the above understanding, naturally, the purpose of literature is also learning to inculcate human values to students. Literature can affect the power of emotion, imagination, creativity, and intellectual property so that students are developed optimally. In the study of literature, many experts complain weaknesses of literary learning in school, such as learning materials that are only emphasize memorizing literary terms, literary definition, literary history than intimacy with literature itself. There are also less likely for teacher to master literature and its learning so they are not able to teach them. Every competence related to literature should be developed from the student, this competence through offhand and not taught. Evaluation tool for the study of literature is also less challenging and less comprehensive. Learning literature so far still feels difficult and intimidating for students. It's time for learning literature as a comfortable, challenging,
and fun learning. Learning conditions that are less familiarizing students to literature make students become novels myopic, short stories myopic, shortsighted drama and poetry myopic (Wahyudi, 2013).

In teaching English Literature in non-native contexts, the teachers and learners face certain difficulties and problems due to cultural, racial and linguistic differences (Wahyudi, 2013). British or English cultural references are not known or familiar to the learners and hence many times they do not understand the matter as is viewed by the author. This cultural aspect includes all such factors like geography, topography, climate, history, religion, social and personal relationships, habits of thoughts, social values, moral codes, arts, sports and entertainments and so on.

Next is racial difference or difference of attitudes and of certain assumptions (Wahyudi, 2013). Racial prejudices about the writer or about his country may become an obstacle in having proper understanding and learning of English Literature or literature of any non-native language. Then the literature produced in long past with past references and ideas may create misunderstanding in the minds of learners as to the relevance of such materials. Such works are seen to be outdated topics to learn. In addition, if the learner is not familiar with the history or social upheavals of that country (England), with such references he may feel it all strange and even out of his range of understanding. Therefore, the teacher’s aim should be to direct students’ efforts and help them to see literature, themselves, and their environment in perspective (Lewis and Sisk, 1963).

One way to engage students in the study of literature is through the use of media texts. These include films, photographs, and even abstract art pieces. The media can be used as a bridge to acquiring skills in literary analysis (Choo, 2006). While some educators may insist that the literature classroom should remain “untainted” in its teaching of classical works, we will probably find that our students will inherently show more interest in media texts than in literary texts. After all, students today are exposed to more texts in the form of images than any other generation. Teachers can take advantage of this by using the media to engage students and help them better appreciate literature.

In accepting new types of texts, English teachers are likely to turn to film (Muller, 2006). Often, films are presented to students in ways that treat film as literature. Teachers encourage students to look for elements such as plot, symbolism, and setting—elements they would analyze in reading a printed text. At other times, students are asked to find differences between the printed text and the movie version. While useful, these methods of film as literature ignore film as a unique moving medium able to present texts in ways literature cannot. By critically thinking about film as film, students will learn to scrutinize a new generation of text—read daily outside the classroom—with its own language and convention (Muller, 2006).

Teaching film as literature does have its advantages. Teasley and Wilder (1997) assert that few students, if any, have had formal training in film analysis, whereas students usually come to the English classroom with different levels of reading skills. Using film as a text in the English classroom helps to level the playing field as most students are equally inexperienced in film analysis. Vetrie (2004) notes that students with low motivation are more willing to think, talk, and write about film than about books, regardless of which skills in Bloom’s taxonomy are being employed. Film can also be utilised as a tool to help students understand how literary devices are used in prose (Choo, 2006). The media are also effective as a platform for the application of literary skills. Literature has long been associated with passive appreciation, as students are tasked to produce critical essays on works of literature, rather than active production of literature. Teachers can use media to add a practical component to the curriculum. For example, students can apply their knowledge of metaphors and symbols by constructing an advertisement. They can also apply plot sequencing and narrative techniques in the production of a short film. Choo (2006) mentions that by including the production of media in the syllabus, teachers can connect the knowledge learnt in the Literature classroom to the media-saturated world of their students. While using film as literature does put struggling readers at less of a disadvantage and incorporates elements of English language and literature, it falls short in a number of ways. First, because films used as literature are taught in nearly the same way a teacher would teach literature, students struggling with literature might also struggle with film. Using film as literature still favors students with a strong grasp of narrative analysis skills, for it focuses mostly on the elements that film shares with literature, not on the unique ways a film expresses its narrative (Muller, 2006). Second, the film-as-literature approach ignores the fact that a director has created a film text to shape the viewer’s reactions. Many teachers focus on reader reaction, gauging students’ reactions to a text as related to their life experiences. While this approach is useful, Pirie (1997) argues that teachers must not only consider how viewer/reader response shapes the text but also how the text is created to shape our reactions. Finally, while film as literature can benefit struggling populations, it falls short of challenging all levels of students. Students already skilled in literary analysis would gain little benefit from a film-as-literature approach beyond that already provided by studying printed texts.

Seeing the facts mentioned above, it is interesting to find out whether or not there is significant difference between the students who are taught using films and those who are assigned to read the novels and
short story and to know the students’ opinion on the implementation of film as media to teach literature at Tarbiyah Faculty IAIN Raden Fatah Palembang.

Methodology
In this study, the writer used a pre-experimental method by applying a non-equivalent group posttest-only design. This study required two parallel classes, experimental and control groups.

The experiment was done in 7 meetings. One meeting was for posttest and six meetings for treatment. It took 2x50 minutes per meeting. The population was all English Department students of Tarbiyah Faculty of IAIN Raden Fatah Palembang who took Introduction to Literature subject. There were one hundred and twenty students as the population and eighty students were used as the samples of the study. They were divided equally into experimental and control groups. Both groups were given the same materials. The difference was only on the media used. The experimental students were given three films to watch and the control students were given two novels and one short story to read. They were given the same title. The titles of the novel, short story and the novel were: Jane Eyre written by Bronte (1847) and the newest film version which was released in 2011, To Kill a Mockingbird written by Lee (1960) and the only film version released in 1962, and The Curious Case of Benjamin Button written by Fitzgerald (1922) and the film version released in 2008. The experimental group was given two weeks to watch the films, summarize, review, and make group presentation on the films they watched. The control group was also given two weeks to read the chapters they were assigned to, summarize, review, and make group presentation on the novel/short story they read. And on the seventh meeting both groups were given a posttest. The posttest was made similar for both groups, so the score they got could be reliable.

To find out the students’ opinion on the implementation of using films as media to teach literature, an open-question questionnaire was given before the posttest. The questionnaire consisted of four questions.

Discussions
From the beginning of the treatment, it was assumed that films as media did make a difference in students’ achievement (see Table 1). Before conducting independent samples t-test, the normality score of posttest was administered. Based on the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test, it was found out that the whole scores for both experimental and control groups in post tests had log normal distribution (for experimental group= 0.96 and for control group= 0.36). Moreover, from the mean score obtained by each group, it was found out that the experimental group achieved better score than control group. The skewness and kurtosis of the experimental group were 0.62 and -0.51 and for the control group the skewness and kurtosis results were 0.70 and 0.28.

<table>
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<th>Group</th>
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Meanwhile, from the result of independent samples t-test, it could be confirmed that films as media in teaching literature showed significant difference from both groups, as t_count was 6.734 which was higher than the t_table (df=78) 1.99. And the significance 0.000<0.05 also strengthens the independent samples t-test result.

After conducting the t-test, the questionnaire result will be discussed. For question number one, thirty nine students or 97.5% stated that they enjoyed watching the film than reading the novel or short story. Only one student or 2.5% stated that he/she enjoyed reading the novel or short story than watching the movie. The reasons were also varied. Some of them stated that they could understand the plot better and some answered they could easily find the theme of the story.

The second question was answered more vary. As the question was what other aspect of language that the students could gain after watching the films. Eight students or 20% mentioned that they could learn how to pronounce the words better than before, five students or 12.5% answered that they got more vocabulary after watching the films, four students or 10% of the students stated that they could understand the culture after watching the films. 21 students or 52.5% asserted that they got listening skill, and 2 students or 5% mentioned that got reading skill after watching the films as the films shown used English subtitle.
Question number three asked the students how they wanted the films presented on the lecture. No students answered that they wanted to watch the whole films in the class. 10% or four students stated that they wanted to watch half of the films in the class. And most students (thirty six) or 90% answered that they wanted to watch the films at home.

For the fourth question, all students or 100% agreed that films are good media to teach literature.

From the questionnaire result, it could be stated that the students showed a positive response on the implementation of films as media to teach literature.

From the result of the questionnaire, it seems that students were benefited by the usage of films as media to teach literature. First, they felt that they could understand the plot and the theme better compared to when they read the book. It is because the novel version was usually more theme one hundred pages which took a longer time to spend to read than watching the film which usually only lasted for maximum three hours. The statement above is supported by Choo (2006) who states that film can be utilised as a tool to help students understand how literary devices are used in prose. Second, students stated that they could understand the culture of the people when they were presented on the film better than on the novel/short story. It is because the film showed the interaction between people which could not be obtained on the novel/short story. Students sometimes felt difficult to visualize the novel/short story. The statement is supported by Wahyudi (2013) who states that British or English cultural references are not known or familiar to the learners and hence many times they do not understand the matter as is viewed by the author. This cultural aspect includes all such factors like geography, topography, climate, history, religion, social and personal relationships, habits of thoughts, social values, moral codes, arts, sports and entertainments and so on. In conclusion, films can be used as effective media to teach literature.

Conclusions

After the independent samples t-test was analysed, it showed that there was a significant difference on students’ achievement between the two groups since the t-obtained on the independent sample t-test was 6.734 with significance of 0.000. The students also showed a positive response on the implementation of this media to teach literature. Overall, films can be an effective media to teach literature.

References


