ENGLISH LITERATURE IN INDONESIAN HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM:
ARE WE READY YET?

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Abstract: English has been a dominant foreign language used in Indonesia. This is caused by the demand of communicating with people around the world due to business, education, and other factors. This leads to the changing of English curriculum throughout the time in order to give the best approach and method used in teaching and learning English in Indonesia. The newly-born curriculum, the 2013 curriculum, tries to bring new offer to the English teaching in Indonesia. One of them is teaching English literature for which it has never been applied specifically for High school level in general scale. Having difficulties in teaching and learning general English lead to a big question on whether the implementation of English literature runs effectively and meets the real needs of Indonesian or not. There have been many research conducted to investigate the challenges in teaching ELT in EFL class (Lazar,1994; Grundy,1993;McKay,1982, Lazar,1993; Pugh, 1989, Khatib and Rahimi,2012).However, there have not been any related research done in Indonesia. This study, therefore, will try to analyze the effectiveness of the implementation of English literature seen from the students, teachers, and parents’ perspective in Indonesia. This is a case study. This study will focus on investigating any challenges the students, teachers, and parents encounter from this implementation. The subject of this research is 100 High school students, 50 parents, and 3 teachers in 3Senior High Schools in Jakarta. The results show that all parties are still in doubt whether the implementation of the English literature in Indonesian schools will give more good things than harm ones.

Keywords: English Literature, Students, Parents, and Teacher s’ Perception, Case study

Introduction

Teaching and learning English Literature in EFL class has been a challenging thing both for teachers and students. This is because many people point out that learning the basic English is more important for the EFL learners particularly those who are still in beginner level(Lazar,1994; Grundy,1993;McKay,1982). On the other hand, many linguists also believe that learning English literature, in fact, may improve the English of EFL learner (Lazar,1993; Pugh, 1989, Khatib and Rahimi, 2012). These lead to the up and down of the implementation of English literature in EFL class.

Almost more than a decade that English literature had been abandoned in English class in Indonesia. Decades ago, English literature was given to at least the high school students who took Language Major. However, as the previous curriculum, KTSP curriculum, emerged and put more emphasis in genre-based English, there were few schools which taught English literature in their school. After its hiatus, English literature is once again introduced in the latest English curriculum in Indonesia, the 2013 curriculum. Yet, many people are still wondering whether English literature will be well-implemented or not in the class.

There have been many studies conducted to investigate the use of English literature in EFL classroom. Starting with seminal research in 1967, Povey tried to bring up the topic of the benefit of teaching English literature to EFL class. Then, this was followed by other studies that put more emphasis in investigating the effectiveness of using English literature in improving the students’ English skill (Daskalovska & Dimova; 2012; Khatib&Rahimi; 2012). Other researchers also like to deal with other aspects of the English literature (Erkaya, 2005; Narisahmaedi, et.al, 2014). Yet, most of those studies only focused on investigating the implementation of English literature in Language class, this study then tried to seek out the effectiveness of the implementation of English literature in Life Science and Social science class with the format of teaching both English compulsory and English literature in Indonesian School.

Literature Review

Teaching English literature in EFL class has always been a debatable topic. Those who affirm to the benefits of learning English literature point out that learning literature may give a more engaging learning that combines the meaningful input or authentic material with certain emotion and setting (Lazar,1993; Collie and Slater,1990;Carter and Long, 1991, Pugh, 1989, cited in Khatib and Rahimi, 2012). Moreover, learning English literature may also improve the linguistic comprehension for the learners (Povey, 1967).

On the other hand, there are also linguists who highlight the disadvantages of learning English literature for EFL classroom. Firstly, Lazar (1994), Bassnett and Grundy (1993), and McKay(1982) point out that an
Many students, particularly those who are taking English literature, have already divided into Life science (Group A), Social science (Group B), and Language (Group C) based on their interests. In the case of English subject, this leads to the division of the English classes into the form of English compulsory or English as a second language (ESL). The education system in Indonesia is ready to implement again the English literature at school. These arguments rose in the implementation of English literature to all students. This leads to the question whether it could be effectively and efficiently conducted in the class. As Wasanasomsithi (1998) believes that English literature should only be taught as a complementary not as a whole subject. Unlike the previous research which focused on the implementation of English literature in Language class (Daskalovska & Dimova, 2012; Khatib & Rahimi, 2012; Bibby & McIlroy, 2013), lower level (Lazar, 1994), some components in literature such as short story (Erkaya, 2005), cultural aspect (Narisahmadi et al., 2014), this study investigated the effectiveness of the implementation of English literature in Indonesian Senior High Schools that apply both English compulsory and English literature in all ten grade students in their school.

Methodology
This is a case study. McKay (2006:71) defines a case study as ‘a single instance of some bound system, which can range from one individual to a class, a school, or an entire community’. Moreover, as Nunan (1992) believes that case study method is really appropriate for language teachers who want to investigate their work and other things related to their work field.

There are three main subjects for this study. There are 100 students, 50 parents, and 3 teachers. For the teachers, it was formerly planned to have 5 teachers. However, it was later found out that of five schools, there are two schools which only teach English compulsory. Thus, the schools that are the subjects for this study are only Labschool Jakarta, Labschool Cibubur, and Labschool Kebayoran. The participants from the students are the ten grade students in 2013-2014 Academic year. They were chosen since they are the first batch who experienced the implementation of English literature of the 2013 curriculum. The parents are also those students’ parents. Moreover, the teachers who were interviewed in this study are the teachers who are in charge in teaching English Literature.

The implementation of English literature that was investigated is the one that is set in the 2013 curriculum. The schools chosen in this study are the schools that have already implemented this subject in their class. The chosen schools in this study are the schools that implement both English literature and English compulsory to all their students. Unlike the previous implementation of English literature in former curriculum, the implementation of the English literature in 2013 curriculum gives two ways of implementation either to open a class of language or teach it to all students both in life science and social science. This study used a triangulation technique in collecting the data. This study conducted observation, interview, and questionnaire. These were done in order to avoid invalid and unreliable result. Carter and Nunan (2001) believe that triangulation will help improving the integrity of a study. The collected data would give the answer to what extent the subjects of the study perceive the implementation of English literature. The questionnaire given was in the form of Likert style. There are 25 items in the students and teachers’ questionnaire and 10 items for the parents. Those items are given based on four major points analyzed in this study. Firstly, the purpose of English literature. Through the questionnaire, the participants were asked to determine whether the English literature they have learnt meets their personal goal particularly in improving their ability in English or meet the
curriculum demands. Secondly, the material of English literature. This point was given mostly to find out whether the participants think that the materials given are appropriate and able to improve their English or not. Moreover, this point also investigated whether there are similarities in the material given in English literature and English compulsory. Thirdly, the learning process of English literature. This point tries to reveal whether the conducted activity or the method of teaching and learning of English literature is effective or not. This also helps the study to find out whether the teachers have successfully interpreted the curriculum well to their teaching method through the students, the parents, and the teachers’ own perception. Lastly, the overall evaluation of the implementation of English literature. This tries to analyze whether the overall implementation of English literature in subject research has been conducted efficiently and effectively. Moreover, this point also reveals the participants’ choice whether they agree to the system that divides the English lesson to English literature and English compulsory or not. The findings were then calculated and analyzed. The final results show whether Indonesian school are ready to implement English literature or not.

The Results
A. Findings and Discussion on the Students’ Perception

Students’ Perception on the Purpose of the Implementation of English Literature

Based on the results of the questionnaire, around 61% of the participants agreed that the implementation of English literature has improved their English ability. Even though, almost over half of them thought that they were not so sure whether they got knowledge on the culture of the British or American through the literature.

Students’ Perception on the Chosen Material of English Literature Subject

There are many aspects analyzed for this part. There was a slight difference between the students who thought that the material given in the English literature subject have already met their needs (45%) with those who had no idea whether those really meet their needs or not (43%). However, when it comes to the question that asks them of whether or not the material gave them opportunity to improve their English skill, over 50% showed agreement that it improved their English skill. The various type of material given is also one of things investigated in this study. The result shows that around 45% agreed that materials they were given are varied such as poem and short story. However, most of them showed a neutral opinion on the level of appropriateness and difficulties of the given texts compared to their own ability. Interestingly, even though there is a significant number of 24% of the students who thought that the texts given are difficult, there is 46% of the students thought that those texts have improved their English ability only 2% of them who thought the opposite. Moreover, there are around 35% of the students who thought that there are similarities on the materials given in English compulsory and English literature and 37% who thought some of them are similar but some are not.

Students’ Perception on the Purpose of the Learning Process of English Literature

This section tries to reveal whether the learning activities of the English literature are well-conducted or not. There are 37% of the students thought that sometimes the activities are varied but sometimes are not. As the approach that bases the implementation of the 2013 curriculum is Scientific Approach which put more emphasis on the learning activity in group work, this study also tries to find out whether the teachers gave many group work and whether it is effectively conducted in English literature subject or not. The result shows that the teachers gave many group work with more than a half of the students confirmed it. However, 57% of the students still did not know whether the activity improve their comprehension on the English literature or not. Moreover, as Lazar (1994) believes that it is important to give vocabulary exercise before learning English literature particularly for EFL learners. Thus, this study found out that there are only 44% of the students confirmed that their teachers gave them vocabulary exercises and with the same percentage, the students also thought that those exercises helped them to understand the content of the English literature materials. Furthermore, there are 50% of the students who confirmed that their teachers also gave them exercises on the main idea. In terms of feedback, almost half of the students confirmed that their teachers gave them feedback on their exercises and only 9% said that their teachers had never given them any feedback. Overall, there are around 60% of the students felt satisfied on the way their teachers teach them English literature, around 30% felt satisfied, and 7% felt dissatisfied.

Students’ Perception on the Evaluation of the Implementation of English Literature

In this section, this study tries to reveal the evaluation of the implementation of English literature from the students’ perspective. In general, half of the students thought that the implementation of the 2013 curriculum doesn’t meet their needs. Moreover, in terms of group work activity, 52% of the students are still not sure whether it is effective or not to be implemented in learning English literature. As discussed before in the material section, the students thought that there are similarities on the material given in English Compulsory and English Literature. Therefore, More than half of them agreed that it is much better to set a different material or different topic for English literature and English compulsory and only 14% of them who disagreed. In terms of the
evaluation on whether or not the system of implementing both English Compulsory and English literature to all the students, with an average of 38% from point 22 to 25, it is revealed that most of them are still not sure whether it is better to have only English Compulsory or English literature or have both of the subjects.

B. Findings and Discussion on The Parents' Perception

In this section, there are findings and discussion on how the parents show their satisfaction on the implementation of English literature, their opinion on the material and method given, and their suggestion on whether or not the implementation of English Literature that goes along with the English Compulsory still needs to be conducted.

Most parents are still not sure whether they are satisfied with the implementation of the 2013 curriculum. This is proven with 38% of them are in the neutral position. Yet, the total of those who dissatisfied and strongly dissatisfied (38%) towards this implementation are higher than those who satisfied and strongly satisfied (24%) with it. Talking about the material, there are 38% of the parents agreed that the materials given improved their children English ability, 32% of them are not sure about it, and total 24% of them disagreed of it. Moreover, the parents also showed positive response by having 42% in total of the method of teaching English literature to their children, 36% of them are neutral, and 22% in total showed negative response towards it. The parents also seemed to get along with the format of having English literature and English compulsory by showing their agreement (total 48%) on continuing the system in upcoming academic year. Moreover, there are only 22% that do not know whether the format is good or not, and 30% of them disagreed of it.

C. Findings and Discussion on the Teachers’ Perception

Teachers’ Perception on the Implementation of English Literature

The findings show that most teachers (67%) thought that they have coped with the demands or the purpose of the teaching of English literature that based on the 2013 curriculum. This happens because around 33% of them did not really differentiate the material in the English compulsory and English Literature. The same material in Even though all of them were not sure whether the material or the activity they had given to their students could increase their knowledge on the culture of British people.

"As I teach both of the subjects, English literature and English Compulsory, I tend to have some confusion on teaching the same topics that both subjects have. It is because they only differ in the sub topic such as recount text in English compulsory deals with a personal experience and in English Literature deals with a historical event." - Teacher B

In terms of the material, the teachers found sometimes it was difficult to determine appropriate materials of the English literature to their students. One of the teachers even confessed that at first she felt difficult since the concept of the English literature that she had on her mind was different with what the 2013 curriculum has set up. As she formerly taught English in the Language Class, she thought that learning English literature in the 2013 curriculum system would not be too far from the previous ones. In fact, it was quite different. She also added that the English literature set in the 2013 curriculum seemed to only an expanded subject for the English Compulsory since they are mostly different in the sub topics.

This also leads to the teachers’ perception on whether or not the materials they had given suitable for their students. All of them are not sure about it since they found out that their students faced some difficulties particularly on some English literature texts such as an analysis of short story and proverb. One of the teachers admitted that she gave a classic literature text to her students such as Jane Eyre and other texts. Yet, she realized that even though she thought the texts have such an interesting plot, the students were not ready to receive such texts. In terms of the variation of the materials, there is only 33% or one teacher who admitted that she did not give varied materials due to the overlapping of the topics in English Compulsory and English literature. However, the rest show that they gave various materials from short story, poem, and proverb.

Moreover, all teachers believe that the materials they had chosen have helped the students to improve their English ability even though some of them admitted that the type of texts they gave was sometimes one or two level higher than their students’ ability. One of them even highlighted that the implementation of English literature and English compulsory is really beneficial to the students.

"As far as I taught the English literature and English compulsory, my students seem more interested in learning English literature since it gives more interesting topics than in English compulsory. Moreover, this makes them to use more proverbs on their daily life thus they know more new vocabularies and new way to express their own opinion."-Teacher A

The teachers also reveal that there are some similarities on the topic of English literature and English compulsory. However, they also thought that the 2013 curriculum have set up a clearer grading of the material through the different sub topics. Moreover, one of the teachers thought that it would be much better if there are given a real example of the material such as the title of the short story and etc. Thus, there will not be any confusion in determining the materials.

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Finding and Discussion on the Teachers’ Perception on the Learning Activity

In this section, it is revealed that most teachers thought that they had met the demands of English Literature subject in the 2013 curriculum. They also said that they had given many various activities to their students such as short story analysis, poem reading, and drama. Yet, one of them admitted that she had overestimated her students’ ability which led her to give English literature activities like in Language Class

“I admit that in the beginning, I tend to overestimate my students’ ability. As formerly I have ever taught in Language class, thus, I assumed that the lesson will be the same as the material I taught in Language Class. I also tend to give a real English literature analysis by asking the students to interpret the situation in a short story or even in poem or proverb. Then, I realized that the students found it difficult to do since not all of them were really able to do so”-Teacher C-

Talking about vocabulary and main idea exercise, only 33% gave these exercises to the students. She believed that those exercises helped the students a lot in understanding the text and improving their English ability. The rest argued that there was not enough time to give those exercises to the students and they thought those things would be much better taught in English Compulsory. Moreover, all of them thought that giving group work activities were a good thing to do in English Literature class yet it could not be implemented to all materials. Particularly, those which need some deeper analyses and assistances from the teachers. The teachers also thought that giving feedback to their students’ work have helped the students to know their mistakes and improve their ability. However, most of the teachers also taught that they could not always manage to give feedback on all the exercises given due to the limited time compared to number of students.

Finding and Discussion on the Teachers’ Perception on the Evaluation of English Literature

There are certain evaluations that the teachers tried to highlight on the implementation of English Literature of the 2013 curriculum. Firstly, most teachers believe that it is necessary to have a further evaluation on the 2013 curriculum to find out whether the things set up in the curriculum have already met the needs of the students particularly the materials and the scientific method of learning the English literature. This leads to the second point on the evaluation of the format of learning English literature. The findings show that there are several formats in teaching English literature in the 2013 curriculum. There are schools that give both English Compulsory and English literature to all their students both Life Science and Social Science class and there are schools which do not hold it. This make most teachers believe that it is much better to just apply the English compulsory than give both of them. This is because they believe that English literature should have been taught only for those who are interested in learning it. As it is categorized in Group C which is group of subjects for those who are interested in learning it, this shows that learning English literature should be optional not a compulsory. On the other hand, another teacher thought that teaching both English Literature and English Compulsory is a good thing since it could escalate their English ability more than those who learn only English compulsory.

Other Findings

There were certain important findings found during the study. It is related to the formats of teaching English literature. Formerly this study tried to interview 5 teachers. Yet, there was found out that two of the targeted teachers did not apply both English formats in their schools. This reveals another finding that there is actually no uniformity in applying this system. Some schools may implement both English, some may have it in Language class, and most only have the English compulsory. Moreover, it was also found out that most schools that apply both English (English Literature and English Compulsory) conduct this in a consideration to have equal teaching hours to all teachers. The 24 hours- teaching hours demand from the government is not equal with the designated hour for the English compulsory which is 2 hours/class/week. If in one school, they only have 7 classes, it means the teachers’ teaching hours only 14 hours/ week. This is still far from the minimum teaching hours. Thus, having both English literature and English compulsory system would be a great solution towards it. Moreover, it was also found that one of the schools gives the responsibility of teaching English literature to a native speaker.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded on several points. Firstly, in terms of whether Indonesian schools are ready or not in implementing the 2013 curriculum, the answer is still in grey area. It means that most participants were not sure whether Indonesian is ready to implement this in the class specifically the Both English format. This is proven from the average score from the participants that most of them are in doubt of the implementation of this system. Secondly, there is a need on a uniformity of the implementation of the format. Throughout the questionnaire and interview, there were found many formats in applying English literature subject. The big question emerges when it comes to the National Examination format of this subject since there are some schools which teach this subject and they which do not. Last but not least, there is a need to have a
clearer gap on the topics or materials given in English compulsory and English literature. As found in the syllabi and questionnaire, there are some similarities on the topics and materials. Although there are certain subtopics given for both English, the teachers still found them quite confusing to distinguish.

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