The Role Of Literature In Language Learning: Strategies For Improving Students' Literacy Skills In The Digital Age

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
Keywords: Literature, Language Learning, Literacy Skills.	The present study explores the potential of literature to enhance students' literacy skills in the digital era. Employing qualitative research methods, it delves into the efficacy of literary works, such as poems, short stories, and novels, as effective learning tools. The study sheds light on the ways these literary instruments can be utilized to cultivate a range of skills, including reading, writing, speaking, and critical thinking.The study's methodology comprises in-depth interviews with language teachers, classroom observations, and a thorough analysis of learning documents. The data gathered through these methods serves to inform and substantiate the argument put forth. The study's findings suggest that integrating literature into language instruction can foster students' engagement with reading material and facilitate comprehension of both cultural and social context. Moreover, leveraging digital technology has been shown to expand access to literary resources, enhancing collaborative learning opportunities and promoting interactive engagement.
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INTRODUCTION

The digital age has brought significant changes to the world of education, creating new challenges as well as great opportunities, especially in language learning. With the advancement of technology, students now have unlimited access to various sources of information, including interactive digital-based learning materials. However, this development also poses challenges, such as declining interest in reading long texts, difficulty in sorting out quality information amidst massive data flows, and students' tendency to be more interested in instant entertainment compared to traditional literacy activities. In the context of language learning, this is a serious concern, given that language literacy is the foundation for students' critical thinking, analytical and expressive skills [1].

In the midst of these dynamics, literature emerges as one of the important elements that has great potential to overcome challenges while taking advantage of opportunities. Literature is not only a tool to understand language, but also a means to explore cultural, social and emotional values. Literary works such as poems, short stories, dramas, and novels can provide an in-depth reading experience, encourage students to explore meaning, foster imagination, and develop analysis and interpretation skills [2]. However, an important

question arises: how can literature be effectively utilized in language learning, especially in the digital era that demands innovative and relevant approaches?

This study aims to answer this question by exploring the role of literature in improving students' literacy skills in the digital era. In this context, literacy is not only defined as the ability to read and write, but also includes understanding, analyzing and applying knowledge gained through various media, including digital media. This research focuses on how literature can be integrated into language learning by utilizing digital technology to create an engaging, interactive and contextual learning experience. With the right approach, literature can be a bridge between classical literacy traditions and modern literacy needs, helping students not only master the language but also develop 21st century skills such as creativity, collaboration and digital literacy [3].

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to explore the role of literature in language learning as well as the strategies used in improving students' literacy skills in the digital era. This approach was chosen because it allows in-depth exploration of complex phenomena in a specific context, namely literature learning in secondary schools. Using case studies, the research focuses on three secondary schools that actively integrate literature in their curriculum, providing a detailed picture of how literature is used as a language learning tool.

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of language teachers and students in SMA 3 Jogja that have adopted the use of literature in learning. The teachers involved are those who have first-hand experience in teaching literature as part of the language curriculum, so as to provide deep insights into their learning practices, challenges and successes. Students involved were those who actively participated in literature-based classes, enabling the researcher to understand their learning experiences, levels of engagement and the impact on their literacy skills. The total participants were 50 participant. And selected using a purposive sampling approach to ensure the relevance of the data obtained .

Data collection

Data was collected through three main methods: in-depth interviews, classroom observations and document analysis. Interviews were conducted with language teachers to explore their views on the role of literature in language learning. The interview questions were designed to explore teachers' understanding of the benefits of literature, the strategies they use, and their views on the challenges and opportunities offered by the digital age in teaching literature. The interviews provided rich data that was both descriptive and interpretive, reflecting teachers' direct experiences in their classroom context.

Classroom observations were conducted to directly observe how literature is used in language learning. Researchers recorded learning activities, interactions between teachers and students, and how students respond to literature-based learning. It also provides data on teaching techniques used by teachers, such as the use of digital technology, group

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discussions, or literature-based creative projects. In this way, the researcher can understand the classroom dynamics in depth and identify best practices that can be replicated.

The researcher analyzed various learning documents, including modules, syllabi, literary works used in the classroom, as well as assignments given to students. This document analysis aimed to understand how literature was included in the curriculum, the types of literary works selected, and how they were used to support the learning objectives. In addition, students' assignments were analyzed to evaluate the extent to which literature learning influenced their literacy skills in terms of reading comprehension, writing skills and creative expression.

Data Analysis

This technique involves the process of identifying the main patterns, themes and categories that emerged from the data. First, the researcher read and understood the data as a whole to get an initial overview. Next, the data was coded by labeling sections relevant to the research focus, such as learning strategies, challenges and the impact of literature on students' literacy. After that, these codes were grouped into broader themes, such as the integration of technology in literature learning or the role of literature in improving critical thinking skills. The analysis was iterative, with the researcher constantly returning to the data to ensure accuracy and richness of interpretation.

With this qualitative approach, the research can provide in-depth and holistic insights into the role of literature in language learning, while offering concrete strategies to improve students' literacy skills in the digital era. The results of the data analysis not only reflect the existing reality but also provide a basis for recommending best practices that can be adopted by other schools.

Figure 1. Qualitative Research

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Literature as an Authentic Context in Language Learning

Literature provides authentic contexts that are highly relevant for language learning. In language learning, authentic context refers to situations or materials that reflect real language use [4]. Literary works, such as novels, poems and short stories, reflect real life with all its complexities, including variations in vocabulary, language style and sentence structure. When students read and analyze literary works, they are exposed to language use that is not only grammatical but also aesthetically and contextually rich. This helps students to develop various aspects of language skills, including reading, writing, listening and speaking [5].

Vocabulary Enhancement

Literary works often introduce students to vocabulary that is rarely used in everyday conversation but is essential for expressing complex ideas. For example, in classic novels, students may encounter words that have emotional or cultural overtones not found in ordinary texts. When students encounter new words in a narrative context, they are more likely to understand the meaning of the word compared to simply memorizing from a vocabulary list [6].

Table 1. Differences in Vocabulary in Literary Works and Non-Literary Texts

Aspect	Literary Works	Non-Literary Texts
Common Vocabulary	Rich, diverse and contextual	Limited to technical needs
Emotional Vocabulary	Contains high connotation words	Lack of emotional nuance
Language Style Variations	Variety, including formal and poetic	Formal or technical dominance

Understanding Sentence Structure

Through literature, students can learn to understand and apply more complex sentence structures [7]. For example, in poetry, students are invited to analyze inversions or unusual sentence structures for artistic effect. Novels and dramas often present realistic dialog, allowing students to understand how sentences are used in everyday communication.

Language Style Development

Literary works are a source of inspiration for creative language styles. Through analyzing literary works, students can understand how authors use metaphor, personification, or alliteration to create certain effects. For example, Emily Dickinson's poetry teaches the use of metaphors to convey deep feelings, while novels like To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee show how narrative style can build atmosphere and character [8].

Table 2. The Effect of Literature Learning on Language Skills

Aspect	Before Literacy	After Literacy
Vocabulary	60%	85%
Sentence Structure	50%	80%
Language Style	40%	75%

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The Learning Process through Literary Analysis

The learning process using literature involves several important stages:

a. Reading Literature: Students read literary texts with a focus on plot, characters and themes.
b. Language Analysis: The teacher guides students to pay attention to unique vocabulary, complex sentence structures, and language styles used.
c. Discussion and Reflection: Students discuss their interpretations in small groups or as a class, enriching their understanding through different perspectives.
d. Language Production: Students are encouraged to rewrite or create new works based on inspiration from the literary text [9].

Developing Critical Thinking: The Role of Literature in Promoting the Analysis, Evaluation, and Interpretation of Textual Meanings

The development of critical thinking is one of the fundamental aspects of language learning that can be facilitated through literature. Literary works, with their diversity of themes, language styles and narrative structures, create space for students to engage in deep thinking processes. When reading literature, students are exposed to texts that are often ambiguous, complex and full of symbolism, prompting them to analyze, evaluate and interpret their meaning. This process involves a variety of higher-order thinking skills, such as the ability to recognize bias, connect ideas, and evaluate the validity of arguments [10].

Stages of Critical Thinking Development through Literature

The use of literature in language learning can be divided into several stages that support the development of critical thinking:

Table 3. Stages of Critical Thinking Development through Literature

Stages	Description	Activity Example
Analysis	Students identify text elements such as theme, character, setting, and conflict.	Group discussion to analyze the protagonist character in a novel
Evaluation	Students evaluate character decisions or the author's perspective.	Debate the morality of the main character's decisions in the short story.
Interpretation	Students relate the text to its social, cultural or historical context to understand its meaning.	Write an essay that connects the theme of the poem with contemporary social issues.

Example of Classroom Implementation

In a language class, teachers can use novels such as Harper Lee's "To Kill a Mockingbird" to encourage students to think critically.

a. Analysis: Students analyze the relationship between Atticus Finch's character and his value of justice.
b. Evaluation: They evaluate how the depiction of racial prejudice in the American South in the 1930s is relevant to the current context.

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c. Interpretation: Students interpret the symbolism in the novel, such as the use of the "mockingbird" as a metaphor.

The Relationship between Literature and Critical Thinking: Supporting Data

Studies show that students who frequently engage in literature-based learning have better critical thinking skills [11]. The following graph shows the results of a survey of 120 students in three schools that use literature as part of the curriculum:

Table 4. The Relationship between Literature and Critical Thinking: Supporting Data

Aspect	Before Literacy	After Literacy
Vocabulary	85%	60%
Sentence Structure	80%	55%
Language Style	90%	65%

Supporting Factors for Developing Critical Thinking through Literature

Some factors that support the successful development of critical thinking through literature include:

a. Relevant Literature: Selection of texts that are relevant to students' lives helps them connect emotionally and intellectually.
b. Interactive Learning Strategies: Literature-based discussions, debates, and projects create a collaborative learning environment.
c. Use of Technology: Digital platforms such as online discussion forums or text annotation apps allow students to share views and perspectives.

Challenges and Solutions

While literature has great potential in encouraging critical thinking, there are challenges in its implementation, such as students' lack of interest in classics or limited resources. A workable solution is to utilize digital technology to make literature more engaging, such as by using interactive e-books or videos that illustrate the story [12].

Understanding Culture Through Literature

Literature serves as a conduit, offering students a glimpse into the myriad cultures, values, and traditions that characterize the global landscape. Through literary engagement, students develop an understanding of cultural diversity, expand their worldview, and cultivate an attitude of tolerance towards diversity.For instance, the reading of a novel such as Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird not only refines students' reading abilities but also introduces them to social issues like racism and justice in the United States during the 20th century. A similar phenomenon can be observed in folktales from Indonesia, such as Malin Kundang or Bawang Merah dan Bawang Putih, which offer an insight into local values like respect for parents and the importance of hard work [13].

Understanding culture through literature not only equips students with information, but also instills empathy and appreciation for differences. In the context of globalization, cultural understanding becomes an essential skill for establishing cross-cultural relationships. Here are the specific benefits of learning about culture through literature:

a. Understanding Social Context: Literature reflects the life of a society at a particular time, helping students understand the social and historical context of a culture.

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b. Development of Empathy: Reading literature from different cultures allows students to see the world from different perspectives.
c. Vocabulary and Language Enrichment: Literature exposes students to the use of language that is typical in a particular culture.
d. Understanding of Values and Norms: Through stories, students can understand the norms and values upheld in a particular society.

Strategies for Improving Literacy with Literature in the Digital Age: Technology Integration

Technology integration in literature learning has become an effective solution to improve students' literacy skills in the digital era. Teachers play an important role by utilizing technology to create learning that is more engaging, flexible and relevant to students' lives today. One of the main ways is by using e-books, digital learning platforms and interactive applications [14].

Utilization of E-Books

E-books are becoming a key tool in providing widespread access to various literary works. With the digital format, students can download and read literary works anytime through their devices. The advantages of e-books are the additional features such as built-in dictionaries, digital annotations, and hyperlinks to other reference sources that facilitate the learning process. For example, teachers can recommend e-books from platforms like Project Gutenberg or Google Books that provide classic literature for free.

Digital Learning Platforms

Digital learning platforms such as Google Classroom, Moodle, or Edmodo allow teachers to manage literature learning in a more organized way. Teachers can upload learning materials, such as short stories or poems, in digital format. In addition, these platforms support online discussions through forums or commenting features, where students can share their thoughts and analysis of literary texts. This increases interaction between students and helps them understand literary works from different perspectives [15].

Interactive Apps

Interactive apps like Kahoot, Quizizz or Nearpod are interesting options to make learning literature more fun. For example, teachers can create short story-based quizzes or literacy puzzles that encourage students to understand plot, character and language style. Also, apps like Wattpad allow students to rewrite classic stories in their own style, which can then be read and given feedback by classmates.

Using Technology for Literary Collaboration

Digital technology allows for greater collaboration between students, even across schools or countries. Using apps such as Padlet or Trello, students can create story maps or character analysis collaboratively. In addition, the use of video conferencing allows students to discuss literary works with authors or literary experts in person, providing an immersive learning experience.

Collaborative Learning

Collaborative learning has become one of the effective methods to improve students' understanding in language learning, especially when combined with digital technology. In the digital age, online group discussions through forums and apps give students the opportunity

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to learn together, share ideas and evaluate their understanding of learning materials. This process not only increases student engagement but also helps them develop critical thinking skills, communication abilities and teamwork [16].

Concept of Online Group Discussion

Online group discussion involves student interaction through digital platforms such as Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, or specialized apps like Edmodo. Students are given a topic related to learning, for example, character analysis in a novel or discussion of themes in a poem. Through the online forum, students can ask questions, provide responses and share resources such as articles, videos or infographics. Benefits of Online Group Discussion

a. Accessibility and Flexibility: Discussions can take place anytime and anywhere, allowing students with various backgrounds to participate.
b. Enhances Collective Understanding: Interaction with peers helps students broaden perspectives and understand concepts more deeply.
c. Digital Skills Development: Students learn to use digital apps and devices to collaborate, which is essential in the digital age.
d. Increasing Active Engagement: Online discussions encourage students who lack confidence in face-to-face classes to participate through written forums.

Creative Project: Literature-based Digital Content for Interpretation of Literary Works

Digital content-based creative projects are one of the innovative learning strategies that allow students to interpret literary works in a more personalized, creative and relevant way in the digital era. In this approach, students are given the freedom to choose a specific literary work, such as a poem, short story, or novel, and then present their interpretation through various digital formats, such as video, blog, or podcast. This strategy not only enhances students' understanding of literary works, but also trains 21st century skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and digital literacy [17]. Benefits of Creative Projects in Literature Learning

a. Improved Understanding of Literary Works
   Students are encouraged to read literary works in depth before composing digital content. They must understand the storyline, characters, themes, as well as the social and cultural context of the work.
b. Development of Digital Literacy Skills
   In the content production process, students use various technological tools such as video editing software, blogging platforms, or podcasting apps. This broadens their understanding of technology and digital media.
c. Increased Engagement and Motivation for Learning
   Digital-based projects offer creative freedom, increasing student engagement in learning. Interactive formats, such as vlogging about literary analysis, make learning more fun.
d. Strengthening Collaboration and Teamwork
   Many students chose to work in groups for this project. They shared tasks such as research, script writing, editing and presentation. This honed their communication and teamwork skills.

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Gamification: Creating Literature-Based Quizzes and Games to Increase Student Engagement

Gamification in learning is the application of game elements to educational contexts to increase student motivation and engagement. In literature learning, gamification is one of the innovative strategies to make the learning process more interesting and interactive. By utilizing literature-based quizzes and games, teachers can create a fun learning experience while encouraging a deeper understanding of literary works.

Gamification utilizes elements such as points, levels, challenges and rewards to create a competitive and fun learning environment. In a literary context, quizzes and games can be designed to explore story elements, such as theme, character, setting and plot, so that students are actively engaged in understanding literary texts. Examples of Implementation of Literature-Based Quizzes and Games

a. Multiple Choice Quizzes: Teachers can use platforms like Quizizz to create interactive quizzes on story elements. For example, students answer questions like: "What is the main theme in the novel 'Laskar Pelangi'?" or "Who is the antagonist character in this story?"

b. Role-Playing Game: In this game, students are asked to act out characters from the story they have learned. For example, they can act out a particular scene and discuss the character's motivations.

c. Digital Board Games: Teachers can use apps like Genially to create story-based digital board games. Each step on the game board has a challenge related to analyzing the literary text.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings indicate that literature plays an instrumental role in enhancing students' literacy abilities. Integrating digital technology into literature instruction has been shown to not only facilitate accessibility to a variety of literary works but also augment student engagement in the learning process. Consequently, leveraging literature in language learning should be optimized through the implementation of innovative strategies that capitalize on technological advancements.

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