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## The Contribution of Literature-based Reading Instruction in Increasing Students' Learning Performance: Perception and Impact

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### Abstract

Literature theoretically provides many positive contributions that could impact students' learning performance in reading. It is because literature consists of two fundamental functions that Horace called it *dulce et utile* (sweet and useful). Besides, literature also contains two important elements, i.e., intrinsic and extrinsic. Integrating these literary elements into literary reading activities builds students' comprehension skills to analyze various aspects, e.g., character, plot, setting, theme, and stylistics as the intrinsic elements and sociology, psychology, politics, and philosophy as the extrinsic elements. In studying the discourses, this research presented perceptual theory and a study of the LBI approach used in a reading course that analyzed the impacts on students' learning performance. The methodology used in this research was *Cresswell's (2016)* mix-method with an explanatory case study approach. To collect the needed data, several instruments were utilized in this research, such as interviews and questionnaires. All the collected data were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. After collecting, analyzing, and discussing the data, the results demonstrated that students perceived that LBI material was enjoyable, challenging, and contains moral teaching. Furthermore, students also felt that LBI material impacted some good learning performance, i.e., LBI material improved students' reading skills, triggered students' critical thinking, and transformed students' learning attitudes.

**Keywords:** literature-based instruction, reading, students' perception, learning-impact

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## 1. Introduction

One of the Greek philosophers, Horace, believed that *dulce et utile* — sweet and useful — must be present in literature (Teeuw, 1984). He suggests that these two elements should be inserted when composing literature. Literary works must provide entertaining things (sweet) to amuse and make the readers enjoy the work. Additionally, through the story's character, the literary text should boost and improve readers' knowledge (useful).

This is why, literature is different from scholarly journal articles or conference papers because literature has an entertaining element patterned through its medium, i.e., language style. According to Faruk (2015), elements of a literary story consist of two elements, i.e., intrinsic and extrinsic. The intrinsic element covers plot, characters, setting, and themes. On the other hand, the extrinsic element represents the external condition of the author (social, cultural, and political condition) when writing the work.

This can be exemplified by the era of romanticism periods (1800-1850) where most romantic authors were concerned with expressing their ideas that illustrated the beauty of the natural environment. The reason why romanticist authors write about the natural environment is because, romanticism emerges as an art movement that responds to industrial revolutions that could potentially impact environmental damage (Rigby, 2014). Besides, the external condition (political-ideological condition) that influences authors in their writing can be exemplified by social realist authors.

These authors were ideologically influenced by Marxism that vis a vis to capitalism, feudalist culture, or any exploitative system. Therefore, most leftist authors compose literary stories that criticize exploitation, discrimination, and oppression towards the working class. Because most workers are from uneducated societies, social realist authors write their works using popular language (Russel, 2018).

Regardless of the political and ideological conditions that shape authors' beliefs in writing stories, it can be stated that every literary author makes an effort to create literary works that contain a *dulce et utile* concept. By reading various works – with different types of genres, themes, and schools – it potentially makes readers educated due to the several valuable aspects (e.g., morals, ethics, and philosophy). By knowing all these valuable aspects, learners then tolerate and respect every diversity as a reality of human life.

From the above experts' theoretical explanation of literature, several theorists of English language teaching (ELT) formulate the incorporation of literature into

language teaching curriculum as what they call literature-based instruction (LBI). Zaker (2016) perceives that applying LBI to the foreign language class program impacts numerous benefits. It is because students are not only equipped with language components and language skills but also become multicultural, critical, and tolerant people (Derakhshan & Shakki, 2019).

Therefore, to prove this presumption, the researcher desires to investigate the students' feelings of LBI material after joining a reading course for a single semester through a couple of research questions as follows:

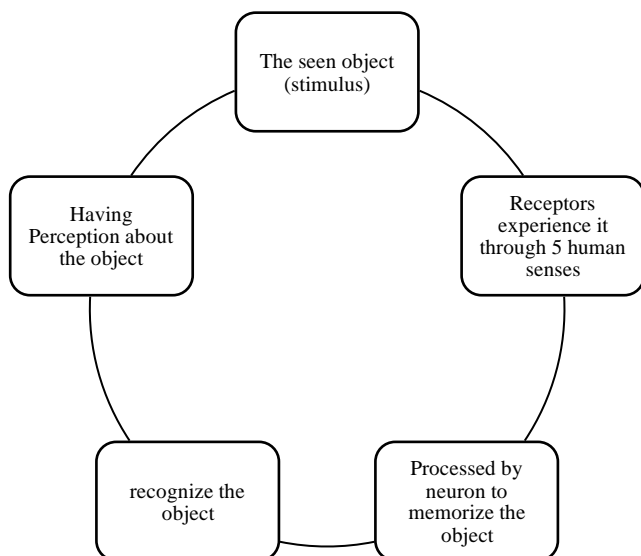
1. How are students' perceptions towards LBI material?
2. How significantly does LBI material impact students' learning performance?

## **2. Literature Review**

### ***2.1. Perception Theory***

The perception theory employed in this research is to measure how students perceive and are satisfied with the learning material designed by their lecturer's method of delivery. Students' perception discourse is important to elaborate on because it can be a main description to determine how well lecturers' teaching model delivers their material (Griffiths & Parr, 2001). Nevertheless, before amplifying in further about students' perception towards LBI, it is crucial to read some theorists' explanation about the main definition of students' perception.

Goldstain and Brockmole (2016) state that in studying the perceptual process, people should be aware of the stimulus and how the stimulus responds to people's conscious experience by identifying seen, heard, and touched objects. This means people cannot identify or recognize the object before experiencing it with the five human senses (Snowden et al., 2012). Furthermore, to experience the targeted object (stimulus), the object should exist. In order to understand the perceptual process, the readers can see it as follows:

**Figure 1***Perceptual Process Patterned by Goldstain and Brockmole (2016)*

To easily comprehend the perceptual process, Goldstain and Brockmole (2016) exemplify the situation where someone sees and focuses on the tree (the object/stimulus). The tree is experienced by one of his/her five senses, i.e., eyes. After being experienced, the neuron processes or works to memorize the form of the object. Furthermore, the person can then recognize the tree forms (e.g., the tree trunk, twigs, tree leaves, the tree fruit, et cetera). After recognizing the tree, the person surely has a perception of the tree.

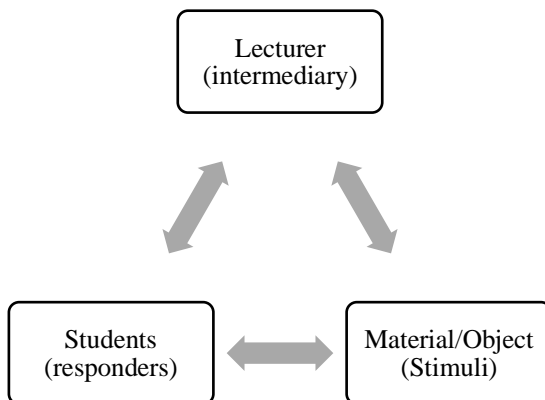
According to Pitcher (1971), people's perception might be different depending on which side they view the object. People who view the house from the front will surely have a different assumption with those who see the house from the left or right side. Because of this difference in viewpoint, people recognize the same object in different ways (perception). However, even though people perceive the same object differently, they all process it through the five human senses.

In the educational class context, some students sometimes cannot process and respond to the learning material (object known as a stimulus) due to several aspects, such as the learning material is unfamiliar because their five senses have not yet been experienced it, the facility that cannot help students to receive the learning material, etc. Thus, Lissek et al. (2008) emphasize the importance of the intermediary role that can help respondents recognize objects (stimulus).

In the class learning activity, the intermediary is the one who can help students understand the material, i.e., teachers (Kaharuddin et al., 2018). When students pay attention to the material (stimulus) through their five senses, then they misunderstand because their neurons cannot cultivate the information. An educator in this position should be aware of their role as "intermediary" who assists learners in responding to stimuli.

**Figure 2**

*Roles of Intermediary in assisting students to respond the stimuli*



Therefore, it can be summed up that responders' responses to the stimulus are also influenced by the role of intermediaries. In other words, students will have perceptions of the objects as a result of the intermediary's role in assisting them (students) to respond to (recognize) the stimulus. In the context of LBI, it can be illustrated that students might have a good or bad perception towards literary material depending on their lecturer's teaching style. If the lecturer can help learners catch the material through his/her good explanation, then stimuli could be easily responded to.

### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Research Design

In conducting this research, the researcher utilized Cresswell's (2016) mix-method design with the approach of a case study as a research design. Applying the mix-method assisted this research to accommodating descriptive and numerical data. The descriptive data were aimed at analyzing the students' perceptions and feelings

confirmed through the interview session. In contrast, the numerical data were aimed at studying how impactful LBI material is in engaging students to study.

### **3.2. Instruments**

In gathering data, the researcher employed several instruments of research. The first instrument was a semi-structured interview. This type of interview was adapted from Hung (2015), that elaborates on the three components of interview, i.e., learners' identity, response, and perception. Furthermore, the second instrument was a close-ended questionnaire with a likert scale model from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree) constructed through the Google Forms application.

### **3.4. Research Setting and Participants**

This study was conducted at Universitas Sawerigading Makassar's English Education Department, which is situated at Jl. Kande No. 127, Bontoala, Makassar, Indonesia. The purpose of this study was to find out how students felt about the LBI material after enrolling in the reading course. In this university, the researcher investigated two classes of the reading course of 4<sup>th</sup> semester students. There were 2 lecturers who were in charge of teaching reading (using literary material) to all these students. Both lecturers' pseudonyms were Mr. Lenin, who was teaching in the first class of reading, and Mrs. Zetkin, who taught in the second class of reading.

Furthermore, the total number of students in each class are varied. For the reading class taught by Mr. Lenin, there were 8 students. However, from all these students, only 4 were selected as samples of interview data with varied pseudonyms, i.e., Stalin, Trotsky, Castro, and Mao. Furthermore, the reading class taught by Mrs. Zetkin consisted of 7 students. Nevertheless, only 3 students of seventeen were selected as the sample for interviewing data, which also had pseudonyms, i.e., Gorky, Orwell, and Neruda. Apart from the interview session, all 15 students from both reading courses will be instructed to fill out a questionnaire with liker scale.

### **3.5. Data Analysis Technique**

After collecting the interview data from participants, the researcher then transcribed it into the scripted data. Afterwards, the researcher analyzed it using a thematic

analysis (TA) approach that referred to Braun and Clarke (2006). This approach enabled the researcher to identify, analyze, and thematize the collected data. Nevertheless, to generate the themes, six procedural steps must be followed and completed. The six steps are all as follows: 1) familiarize with data, 2) generate initial code, 3) search for themes, 4) review themes, 5) name or label themes, 6) produce report.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Students' perceptions toward literature-based instruction (LBI) material

After joining the reading class, each student either from those who join Mr. Lenin's or Mrs. Zetkin's reading class, have perceptions on literary reading material delivered through each lecturer's teaching method. Therefore, in demonstrating the data, the researcher then separates three students' perceptions i.e., a) Enjoyable, b) Challenging, and c) Containing Moral Teaching.

#### 4.1.1. Enjoyable

After interviewing students of both Mr. Lenin and Mrs. Zetkin about their perceptions toward literature-based instruction in reading class, they perceive that studying a reading course using literary reading material is enjoyable. This perception is expressed by Stalin, who believes that literary reading is fun to apply in reading class. According to Stalin's learning experience while participating in the reading course, he perceives that he does not even feel like studying normally, as most university students do in the formal class. He said as follows:

*"Yes, I did (enjoy). I enjoyed it since I did not feel like I was studying a reading course. It felt like I just did my leisurely and enjoyable activity, such as reading a novel (reading material)".*

The enjoyable perception of literary reading material is also expressed by another student of Mr. Lenin, called Trotsky. According to his perception, the reason he enjoys the material is because, during the process of learning, his lecturer teaches literary reading material dynamically, which triggers students' enthusiasm for

studying. Trotsky illustrates as follow,

“Yes, I really enjoyed the reading and learning process because I thought the material provided by the lecturer was very interesting and not monotonous”.

Apart from the Stalin and Trotsky statements above, Orwell (a student of Mrs. Zetkin) also shares his perception that one of the reasons why literary reading material is enjoyable is because it is readable. This is the most important reason why literary reading material (especially when the lecturer uses short stories) is enjoyable because the type of language used in the text tends to be understandable.

Furthermore, He also enjoys studying literary reading material, especially if Mrs. Zetkin utilizes short story material. He added that by using short stories as reading material, he feels that the written language used in the text is understandable. Besides, the short story plot is not as long as other prose. Orwell shares his perception as follows:

“From all the meetings of the reading class, I think the third meeting was memorable for me. because in that meeting, the lecturer used short story. I preferred short stories than any other proeses because the language is not complicated and the storyline is not long”.

From three data points of enjoyable perception above, it is concluded that literature used as reading material makes students enjoy and find it fun to read it. From the data, it can be iterated that there are varied reasons why students feel that literature is fun. From these varied statements, the researcher then categorized them into three enjoyable perceptions, i.e., highly enjoyable perception (HEP), moderately enjoyable perception (MEP), and lowly enjoyable perception (LEP).

The HEP is based on Trotsky’s statement that the reason he enjoys literary reading material is because the material is “very interesting” (to read) and its content is “not monotonous”. Neruda’s statement is categorized as highly perceived because the terms “very interesting” and “not monotonous” indicate that the story is dynamic and trigger his enthusiasm to read. Furthermore, the MEP is based on Orwell’s statements. Orwell feels that literature was enjoyable because of the story line is not long. The researcher categorizes this statement “moderately’ is because the sentence



“is not long” indicates that he might not enjoy the literary story if the plot is long or beyond his expectations.

Finally, the LEP refers to Stalin’s statement that the reason he enjoys reading literature is because he feels that reading literature is like doing some “leisure time.”. Analogizing literary reading activity with leisure activity decreases students’ seriousness towards literary material. Because, the types of literary stylistics were varied (e.g., symbolic, metaphoric, hyperbolic, etc.). Therefore, it is insufficient if students just read it without deeply analyzing the meaning of it. Thus, literary reading activities should not be treated like activities done in leisure time. Because, it requires seriousness, discipline, and quietness. This is the reason why the researcher categorized Stalin’s statement as low perceived.

#### 4.1.2. *Challenging*

According to some students of Mr. Lenin and Mrs. Zetkin, using literature in reading class is challenging. Nevertheless, each student perceives differently the challenging perception of literature-based reading instruction. According to one of Mr. Lenin’s students, Stalin, the use of literary work as reading material is challenging because every student must relate and compare the story's ideality to the readers’ reality. Unfortunately, if students cannot comprehend the story, then it is difficult for them to relate the story to the readers’ real lives. Stalin stated the following:

“My problem was the difficulty in relating and comparing the condition of the plot of the novel with the real condition in my country, such as the differences in cultural background and lifestyle. That is why, sometimes it forced me to think more critically to understand the story. So, it is really challenging for me”.

Mao (a student of Mr. Lenin) also expresses her perception of literary reading material. He states that the literary reading material used by Mr. Lenin is challenging because every time students want to join the reading class, they have to finish and comprehend the reading literary material first before entering the class. Mao stated:

“Literary reading material was challenging for me because the way our lecturer

teaches emphasizes that we read the story (that we are about to study) before entering the class. So, it encourages us to know the substantial idea contained in the story”.

Apart from Trotsky and Stalin’s perception above, Orwell perceives that literary reading material is challenging because it requires semiotic analysis to understand the symbolic meaning uttered by literary characters. Orwell further states that literary reading material is also challenging if its genre depicts historical events. Orwell stated, “The challenge of literary reading was to study a short story, especially a short story that told about history. Because I don't really like history”.

From both of the three challenging perceptions above, it can be conveyed that literature is definitely challenging. The challenge occurs due to several reasons. From all the reasons expressed by every student, the researcher then categorizes them into three levels of challenging perceptions, i.e., highly challenging perception (HCP), moderately challenging perception (MCP), and lowly challenging perception (LCP).

According to all the data above, the researcher places Stalin’s statement, i.e., “difficulty to relate and compare... with the real condition,” as HCP. The word “relate and compare” requires students to do in-depth analysis of both intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of literature. Relating requires a particular reading skill for interpreting symbols and meaning. Furthermore, the researcher categorizes Orwell’s statement as the MCP due to a lack of historical knowledge, which impacts the difficulty of the storyline.

This problematic condition can be resolved by reading numerous articles, books, papers, or literature that contain historical discourse. If this condition is solved, the challenge turns into an opportunity. Finally, the researcher categorizes Mao’s perception as LCP-level towards literary material through the part of his sentence “...emphasizing us to read.”. The researcher places it at a low level of challenging perception because he is just engaged to read, which is basically not challenging at all. As long as he finishes the story, provided by his lecturer, the problem is then eliminated.

#### 4.1.3. *Containing Moral Teaching*

Each student who studies reading in either Mr. Lenin’s or Mrs. Zetkin’s class generally perceives that literary works used as reading material contain moral teaching. Even though every student has various perceptions about moral teaching

content in literature, nevertheless, they finally perceive that moral teaching is always integrated into literary text. These perceptions are represented by Castro, Mao (both of them are students of Mr. Lenin), and Gorky (students of Mrs. Zetkin).

According to Castro, he perceives that the most interesting thing in literary reading material is teaching students about moral values such as ethics, social message, etc. All literary reading material is memorable and valuable for Castro. However, one of the most memorable literary works used by Mr. Lenin was Wilde's 'The Happy Prince' story.

Castro perceives that in this story, the author teaches the readers to be philanthropic people. Castro furthermore states that by being philanthropic, people share some goods with those who deserve them, especially the poor. Castro expresses his perception toward the content of 'The Happy Prince' story through this quotation, "..., it is better if we can help people, especially for the bottom-class or poor people".

Besides, Mao also perceives that literary material contains moral value that can teach the readers based on the author's beliefs or ideology. During joining Mr. Lenin's reading class, Mao was also interested in reading Wilde's 'The Happy Prince' and Oddang's '*Siapa Suruh Sekolah di Hari Minggu*'. For him, both of these stories generally portray many discourses, conflicts, and issues of religion, the democratic system, tolerance, and disciplines. Thus, by reading these stories, students learn a lot of values. Mao states as follows:

"I think the moral messages that I learn from the stories of 'The Happy Prince' and 'Siapa Suruh Sekolah di Hari Minggu'. Both of these stories increase my curiosity to learn a lot of values, such as the concept and values of religiosity, tolerance, discipline, and democracy".

Apart from both Mr. Lenin's students' above, another perception is expressed by Gorky, who states that through literary character, the readers (the students) gain and learn the essentials of moral teaching. If Trotsky was inspired by the story of Wilde's work, Gorky is inspired by the story of Hawthorne's '*Scarlet Letter*'. For Gorky, the main character of this story teaches him to be a tough and patient person who struggles in uncomfortable situations. Gorky conveys as follows:

“During studying the reading course using literary works, all the characters were cool. we firstly thought that all characters were not special. But in the end, the main character is fascinating and teaching us many things. For example, when I read the main character of ‘Scarlet Letter’ novel by Nathaniel Hawthorne named Hester Prynne, the character is really cool. We can obtain moral message, that as women we can’t give up even if we’re bullied by local residents, we still have to be strong”.

From the three moral teaching perceptions of literature above, it is concluded that literary reading material teaches them to be wise. This moral value is definitely expected to build students’ personalities and character. Besides, they also are motivated to practice the moral value – everyday in their life. Because all the teachings in literature universally contained ethics and messages that were valuable to be applied when they returned to their society.

#### **4.2. How Significantly LBI Material Impact Students’ Learning Performance**

After interviewing several students related to their perceptions toward literary reading material, the researcher then investigated their feelings after joining the class. In investigating it, the researcher utilized a Likert scale questionnaire and direct them to fill out the question. The questionnaire elaborates several discourses, such as whether students feel that literary reading material improves their reading skills, triggers their critical thinking, transforms their learning attitude, etc.

According to the results of the Likert scale research questionnaire, most students feel that integrating literature as reading material significantly improves their reading skills. That is because the material of literature is enjoyable and engages students to read through its plot, which contains conflict and climax. However, a few students also feel that literary reading material is not assisting in the improvement of reading skills. In order to know in detail whether students feel that their reading skills are improving or not, the data can be seen in the table below:

**Table 1**  
*Reading Skill Improvement*

| Types of Data      | Likert Scale Characterization |          |       |                |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|----------|-------|----------------|
|                    | Strongly disagree             | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| Number of Students | 2                             | 1        | 9     | 3              |
| Percentages        | 13.3                          | 6.7      | 60    | 20             |

Table 1 demonstrate that 60%, or 9 of 15 students (as the highest percentages), agree that their reading skills improve, followed by 20%, or 3 out of 15 students, who also strongly agree. Meanwhile, the lowest percentages of reading skills improvement are 6.7%, or only 1 of 15 students disagree that literary reading material does not work for their reading skills improvement. Finally, 13.3%, or 2 students, disagree that literary material contributes to their reading skill improvement.

Besides, students also feel that through literary reading material, it increases and triggers their critical thinking skills in analyzing the storyline. According to the data, the reasons why students perceive that literary material contributes to their critical awareness are because the material provided by their lecturers contains various social issues and class conflicts, such as the class contradiction between elite and rural, social exploitation, etc. From all these types of social issues, most students furthermore agree and strongly agree that literature increase their critical thinking when reading literary works. The data can be seen below:

**Table 2**  
*Critical Thinking Skill Improvement*

| Types of Data      | Likert Scale Characterization |          |       |                |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|----------|-------|----------------|
|                    | Strongly Disagree             | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| Number of Students | 1                             | 2        | 7     | 5              |
| Percentages        | 6.7                           | 13.3     | 46.7  | 33.3           |

Based on the above

Table 2, it demonstrates that most students (7 agree and 5 strongly agree) sense that literary reading material provided by their lecturers increase their critical thinking skill. On the contrary, a few students (2 disagree and 1 strongly disagree) also feel that literary reading material does not effectively trigger their critical thinking skills. From the data of critical thinking skills above, it can be concluded that the highest percentages indicate literary material assists students in triggering their critical thinking skills when reading literary story due to its content that narrates many social issues. Interestingly, literary material successfully improves students reading skills and critical thinking skills, students also feel that literary reading material also transforms their learning attitude from dislike reading to enjoying reading. The data that investigates whether literature transforms students learning attitude or not can be

seen as follows:

**Table 3**  
*Learning Attitude Transformation*

| Types of Data      | Likert Scale Characterization |          |       |                |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|----------|-------|----------------|
|                    | Strongly Disagree             | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| Number of Students | 2                             | 1        | 6     | 6              |
| Percentages        | 13.3                          | 6.7      | 40    | 40             |

Table 3 shows that most students vote equally, both agree and strongly agree, on the questionnaire with 40%. Afterwards, 2 of 15 students, or 13.3%, feel that literary reading material is transforming their learning attitude toward reading. Finally, the lowest percentage (6.7%) of learning attitude transformation data is voted by 1 of 15 students. With the majority vote of learning attitude transformation data, it confirms that literary reading material is not only improving students' reading skills and critical thinking, but it also motivates students to transform their learning attitude and habit from dislike to enjoying reading even though the reading class is over.

## 5. Discussion

From the data findings, students' perceptions consist of three perceptions toward literature use in reading teaching program, i.e., literature is enjoyable, challenging and contains moral teachings. Besides, the impact of LBI also consists of three impacts, i.e., LBI is improving students' reading skills, triggering students' critical thinking, and transforming students' learning attitudes. In order to discuss them, each perception and impact of students' learning performance is elaborated with some theoretical explanation of literary experts.

For the first perception (i.e., enjoyable), students view that the reason why literature is enjoyable is because the material seems interesting and not monotonous (dynamic) to read. The interesting reason for reading literature is that students have experienced that their language competence (in terms of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation) has increased a lot. This is also studied by Erkaya (2005) and Deepa and Iankumaran (2018), who found that literature is interesting because it helps students acquire vocabulary. Definitely, with the improvement of language components, they feel delighted due to the ability to share their opinion in English, either through writing or speaking. That is why, it is reasonable why students stated

that literary reading material is enjoyable for them.

Apart from language component development, Salgaro et al. (2021) also enhanced the logical fact that students/readers are interested in reading the material because the story contained good (represent angle) and bad (represent evil) characters who would run the story in accordance with their roles. Readers might enjoy the good character due to the fight against crime or the bad things caused by the bad character. Salgaro et al. argue that illustrating the conflict between both of these characters colors the story so that the readers enjoy the adventure of the good character in fighting crime.

Besides, Habók et al. (2024) also argued that literary reading material was interesting, especially if the learners enjoyed the electronic text of literature. By using electronic material types, students stimulate their creative thinking by enriching and comparing the information gained from literary texts with the information obtained from the internet. This is what Koskimaa (2007) and Skains (2010) called hypertext reading activity. Hypertext is a recommended reading strategy that can be applied by learners. Because, while enjoying the story, students also gained some insightful information that helped them analyze the story. Thus, with this reading strategy, students increase their literacy (Kheykhahnia et al., 2020).

Another student's perception states that the reason why literature is enjoyable as a material for reading is because it is not serious reading material and its storyline (especially for short stories) is concise. This perception is quite similar to what Lawson (2023) analyze that most students (especially children or young learners) enjoy reading literary stories if the story script is short and easy to complete. Because if the literary script contained hundreds of pages, students who had previously never experienced reading literature would be bored. Lawson continually states that if this situation happens, it can be a waste of valuable instructional time because they are already unmotivated to study.

At this point, the researcher argues that the more students read, contemplate, compare with other literary texts, and analyze them using some literary scholars' explanations provided on the internet, the more they are interested in and enjoy the story. Because they are not only obtaining the moral teaching, useful message, and teaching (Utile), but they also gain a comprehensive explanation from scholars or literary theorists. This is also studied by Derakhshan & Shakki (2020) that the reading activity (especially when the reading material is analyzed using literary theories) students' enthusiasm to read. So that it influences students' learning performance in



reading. It is the reason why literary reading activities impact students' reading skills. This can be seen in the chart of reading skills improvement data that 60% of students agree that their reading skills improved, followed by 20% who strongly agree that their reading skills increased. Thus, with the above numerical data, it can be concluded that literature is not only perceived as enjoyable reading but can also impact a good reading performance.

Furthermore, the second perception expressed by students who joined the reading class program was that literary material was challenging to read. According to the data, students state that the reason why literature is challenging to read is because it forces students to understand the philosophical and symbolic meaning uttered by the story character. Besides, it also pushes students to relate the story to their real-life situation.

Menninghaus et al. (2017) state that engaging students to relate to and comprehend the story requires students to involve their emotions, feelings, and empathy to follow the storyline. Of course, for Menninghaus et al., involving all these things is challenging. The challenging situation occurs when students lack a theoretical basis to study, analyze, and relate the story to their real lives. Contemplating, reflecting, and contextualizing the literary story in students' real-life situations required them to know about culture, sociology, and any literary approaches used to study works. Thus, in order to overcome this challenging situation when reading the story, students must enrich their knowledge with literary theories that can help them analyze the work.

Vieira Araújo and Gerling Moro (2021) argue that in order to empower students to analyze socio-cultural phenomena in literature, we must provide them a semiotic theory. Semiotic theory enables students to analyze the hidden meaning behind the text. Through semiotic analysis, students can uncover clues and symbols for following and conceiving the storyline. Thus, by utilizing semiotic analysis, students potentially have broad knowledge and new interpretations due to unfolding the symbolic meaning that portrayed socio-cultural phenomena (Shakki et al., 2021).

Another challenging situation is the compulsion to comprehend the story before entering the class. Analyzing this challenging situation of reading through Chinpakdee and Gu's (2021) analysis conveys that forcing students to read before participating in the class is a challenging task. It is because reading is a process of matching words to meaning that requires time and space to make readers enjoy and internalize the text.



The study, done by Chinpakdee and Gu's (2021), stated that if students who were not accustomed to reading or do not like reading at all, then this instruction (reading before entering the class) is positively challenging for them. However, if they eventually got used to reading and enjoying the reading material (whether before or when the class started), this challenging situation turned out to be a supporting situation that helped learners comprehend the reading material.

The researcher argues that these challenging literary reading activities are basically profitable for students. Even though the students might psychologically feel they are emphasized and forced to understand the story before entering the class and unfold the symbolic or hidden meaning that portrays socio-cultural phenomena, the benefits are that they become used to train their analytical and critical thinking. The researcher views that the more students are instructed and stressed to read, analyze, and criticize the story, the more they become critical of any text. It is because, they are accustomed to studying social conflict in their literary reading activities.

These benefits are in line with the second chart, as is the impact of reading literary material that contains various social issues and class conflict. So that it triggers students' critical analysis. Based on the data in the second chart, it shows that most students (7 agree and 5 strongly agree) sense that literary reading material provided by their lecturers increases their critical thinking skills. This chart indicates that 12 of 15 students feel that literary material has a positive impact on their learning performance, especially in terms of students' critical thinking skills. This analytical ability is definitely indispensable, especially if students would like to generate an objective interpretation. Because, critical thinking ability requires students to do in depth analysis through hermeneutic or semiotic analysis of literary text.

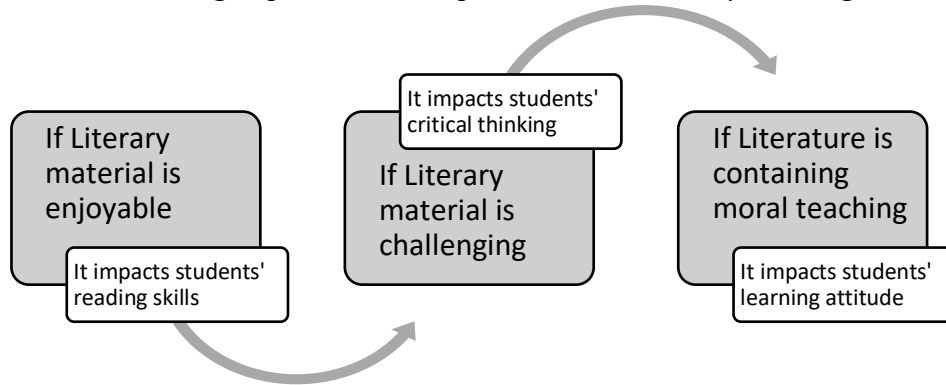
The last perception students have after learning literary material in the reading class program is that literature contains moral teachings. As had been explained by Horace in Teeuw (1984), who is one of the philosophical thinkers of Greek, literature contains *dulce et utile* (read: entertaining and educating) as a principle of literary discourse. This means that literature is not only aiming to make readers laugh but also educate people about ethics, morality, and wisdom (Kennedy, 2014; Salgaro et al., 2021; Sugiyartati et al., 2020). These values are the teachings integrated by authors (in their stories) as a strategic instrument to build character, increase knowledge, and soften the readers' hearts. Moreover, Culler (2009) states that all these teachings are oriented to move people's consciousness to be what the authors expected readers to do.

According to the data findings of students' perceptions, for instance, a student of Mr. Lenin's reading class obtains moral teaching from 'The Happy Prince' story, that a human is supposed to be a philanthropist who shall share some goods with the people who deserve them. Wilde deliberately inserts these moral teachings to make readers become generous (share wealth with others) and not collect stuff just for their own benefit.

The researcher observes that most of Wilde's literary works (such as *The Soul of Man under Socialism*, *Dorian Gray*, and his other works) also contain types of this teaching. Through his works, Wilde desires to build the character of a socialist for their readers and make them care about the condition of the lower class. That is the reason why the students of Mr. Lenin feel that reading Wilde's work makes them want to help poor people.

Apart from students of Mr. Lenin (who study and read Wilde's story), students of Mrs. Zetkin also feel that reading literature also taught them about morality. The moral teaching learned by students can be seen through the story of Hawthorne's 'Scarlet Letter'. According to the data findings, one of the students of Mrs. Zetkin perceives that through this story she learns a meaningful message that people should not give up on something they fight for. Even though people are bullied and underestimated by others. From the story of 'Scarlet Letter', students learn that they will be mentally tough and strong enough to live in real society.

With all the moral teaching contained in literary text, it positively transforms students' learning attitudes from passive to active learners, from local to global conscious, from having antipathy to having sympathy when seeing human exploitation, and from someone who dislikes to someone who loves to read. With the learning attitude transformation gained from moral teaching, it is surely constructive for increasing students' social sensitivity and literacy, which is beneficial in the academic world. To simply illustrate this explanation of students' perceptions and the learning impact of LBI, the researcher designs the literary reading material model as follows:

**Figure 3***Students' Learning Impact and Perceptions toward Literary Reading Material*

## 6. Conclusion

The researcher summed up that if the lecturers create an enjoyable atmosphere of literary reading activity, encourage students to critically analyze the literary text, and provide appropriate literary text that contains lots of moral value for students, then it automatically increases students' enthusiasm for reading text. Definitely, if they are enthusiasts of reading text, it impacts their reading skills improvement, critical thinking skills, and learning attitude transformation. With these positive perceptions of students and the learning outputs, it can clearly be inferred that literary reading material is recommended to be employed because students enjoy the story, challenge themselves to study the story using theory, and obtain many moral teachings from it. Thus, the researcher strongly argues that after joining a reading course using literary material, it impacts on numerous benefits for students' learning performance.

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