

## THE USE OF GRAPHIC NOVELS AS LITERARY TEXT IN LITERATURE CLASS

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### ABSTRACT

*Learning requires text as material for teaching. In literature class, literary text play important roles as the material to deliver the lessons. Many literature classes use common literary texts such as short story, novel, poems, or drama script as the material but nowadays graphic novel provides alternative material for teaching literature. Graphic novel is a type of contemporary novel that uses graphic elements in its narrative storytelling. The use of graphic novels in teaching and literary analysis has begun to be widely used in the classroom; therefore, the aim of this study is to portray the use of graphic novels in literature classes. This study focused on how students accept graphic novels use as material in literary classes. Qualitative study was used in this study and data were gathered from students by using questionnaires. Data were taken from 7th semester students English Department, Faculty of Letters - Universitas Pamulang and were analyzed descriptively. The result of this study showed that students accept the use of graphic novels and help to get a better understanding of the use of the graphic novel as material for literature classes.*

*Keywords : Graphic novels; literary text; literary material; literature learning; students' acceptance*

### ABSTRAK

Pembelajaran membutuhkan teks sebagai bahan ajar. Dalam kelas sastra, teks sastra berperan penting sebagai bahan penyampaian pelajaran. Kelas sastra banyak menggunakan teks sastra umum seperti cerita pendek, novel, puisi, atau naskah drama sebagai materi, tetapi novel grafis saat ini menyediakan bahan alternatif untuk pengajaran sastra. Novel grafis merupakan salah satu jenis novel kontemporer yang menggunakan unsur grafis dalam penceritaannya. Penggunaan novel grafis dalam pengajaran dan analisis sastra sudah mulai banyak digunakan di dalam kelas; oleh karena itu, tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menggambarkan penggunaan novel grafis di kelas sastra. Penelitian ini berfokus pada bagaimana siswa menerima penggunaan novel grafis sebagai materi di kelas sastra. Studi kualitatif digunakan dalam penelitian ini dan data dikumpulkan dari siswa dengan menggunakan kuesioner. Data diambil dari mahasiswa semester 7 Jurusan Bahasa Inggris Fakultas Sastra Universitas Pamulang dan dianalisis secara deskriptif. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa siswa menerima penggunaan novel grafis dan membantu mendapatkan pemahaman yang lebih baik tentang penggunaan novel grafis sebagai materi pelajaran sastra.

Kata Kunci: novel grafis; teks sastra; bahan sastra; pembelajaran sastra; penerimaan siswa

### INTRODUCTION

Many people enjoy reading, listening and viewing, not only informational materials but also entertaining ones such as short stories, novels, poetry, theater, films, songs, and so on. They are the product of literature. Literary works can be produced from the results of human interactions with thoughts, feelings, experiences, to interactions with the environment, society, or nature. In a more specific sense, literary works are works that reflect experiences, feelings, and ideas about life and life. Literature can talk about love or hate, war or peace, happiness or sadness, and so on. Many people are interested in the story of human life with all its behavior and consequences, as well as students, students, or students. This is one of the reasons why literary works are in great demand and used, including in the sphere of education.

In general, literary texts consist of three major groups, namely prose, poetry, and drama texts. Apart from these types, literary texts can also be contemporary materials such as theatre, films, or songs. Prose is a form of literature whose contents are stories. Prose in the form of literary works is usually in the form of short stories, short novels, and novels. The advantage of stories (in their various forms) is that authentic material is a good source of language experience, and a good resource for foreign language skills (Murdibyono, 1997).

The second type of literary text is poetry. Unlike prose, poetry is a literary work that is denser in form but can accommodate various feelings, emotions, or experiences of the author. Poetry is an expression of human feelings that is written using the choice of words and has a rhythm to grow the reader's response. According to Fenton (2002: 10): "poetry is a language to which a special emphasis has been given" (poetry is a language in which special emphasis is given). Usually poetry contains descriptions of objects, past experiences or memories, and expressions of feelings. A poet who is considered good and successful is one who can satisfy the reader emotionally (Goforth, 1998).

The last type, namely drama, is a literary work that is considered the most complete because in addition to being in the form of a script, it can also be in the form of a stage that elaborates on various art forms, such as dance, speech/dialogue art, motion art, stage art, and so on. According to DiYanni (2001), drama is a literary work that tries to bring a story to life through dialogue and performances, assisted by actors/actresses and stage arrangements (stage, costumes, make-up, lighting, etc.).

Graphic novel is a storytelling format that is said to have been pioneered by Will Eisner in the 1970s. Through his works such as "A Contract with God", Eisner presents the type of storytelling through pictures (such as comics) but with themes commonly found in novels, namely the reality of the complexity of human life and the complexity of its problems. Graphic novels then gained some sort of acknowledgment as a literary genre when one of the World War Two memoir graphic novels entitled "Maus" was awarded the highest literary award Pulitzer Prize in the 1980s. Since then, many practitioners in the fields of education and literature have looked at graphic novels as alternative class materials or literary analysis studies.

Since the acceptance of literature into the English curriculum in America in the late 1800s, debates about the focus of teaching this subject have arisen, particularly on issues of literary texts and good reading. There are two traditions of literary reading; the first tradition is a tradition that emphasizes that text plays an important role in learning, while another tradition holds that students as readers have a big role in learning literature. These two traditions ultimately gave birth to various perspectives for teachers in teaching literature to students at various levels of education. The use of literature as a technique for teaching language skills (ie reading, writing, listening and speaking) and language acquisition (ie vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation) is very popular in the field of foreign language learning and teaching today. In addition, in translation courses, many language teachers make their students translate literary texts such as plays, poems and short stories into their mother tongue (Hismanoglu, 2012). The teaching of literature in language classes, although primarily concerned with reading and writing, can play the same role in teaching both speaking and listening. Reading, dramatization, improvisation, role-play,

demonstration, discussion, and group activities centered on a literary work can be the main sources of absorption and training of students' language skills.

Seeing the importance of the role of literature in improving students' abilities, it is important to look at the tradition of teaching literature in the local scope. It will be very important to get an overview of learning literature, especially from the perspective of students as the main goal of learning. This research will be a research that emphasizes on finding the results of the implementation of teaching literature. It has been mentioned that the tradition of teaching literature by text and the reader is an important factor in teaching literature.

## **METHOD**

The research was conducted at the Faculty of Letters, majoring in English Department, Universitas Pamulang. Samples of student opinion were taken in English Literature class 7th semester in the morning (class 07SIGP) and evening (class 07SIGM). The morning classes consist of three classes (P001, P003 and P003) while the evening class consists of two (M001 and M002).

This research dealt with qualitative approach in collecting, analyzing, and describing the data. This research used questionnaire as the main techniques in collecting the data. Descombe (1998) explained there are some advantages using survey techniques in collecting data:

- 1 Empirical data; it produces data based in the observation process.
- 2 Wide and inclusive coverage; it is able to implement in small and large scale.
- 3 Costs and time; it promotes low cost and effective time consumption in collecting the data.

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

To identify how students accept graphic novels as literary text, some questions were prepared such as how easy is graphic novel to be understood comparing to other types of novels? How enthusiastic are you in analyzing graphic novels? And the last question how helpful is reading graphic novel to your understanding about literature?

### **1.1. Students' Perception on of Graphic Novel Comparing to Other Type**

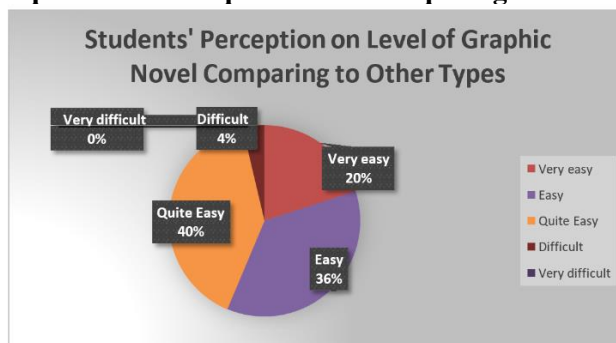


Figure 1. Students' Perception on Level of Graphic Novel Comparing to Other Types of Novels

The first focus was to know students' perception on the easiness level of graphic novel comparing to other types of novel. According to the responses, there were 11 students thought that graphic novel was very easy, 20 students thought that it was easy, 22 students thought that it was quite easy, 2 students thought that it was difficult, and none thought that it was very difficult. It can be seen that most students thought that understanding graphic novel is quite easy. It can be caused by the use of pictures and dialogues bubbles that made story plot more understandable and more interesting to be read

### 1.2. Students' Enthusiasm in Analyzing Graphic Novels

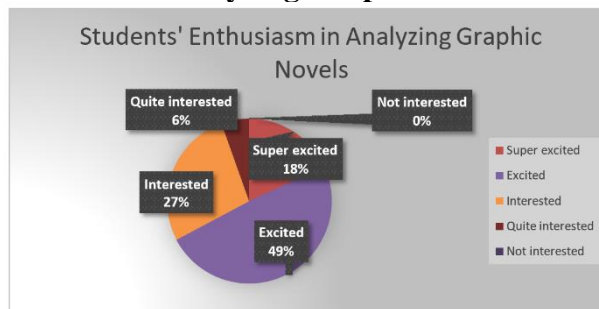


Figure 2. Students' enthusiasm in analyzing Graphic Novels

After knowing how big students' willingness was reading graphic novels, students were asked about their enthusiasm in analyzing graphic. According to the responses, there were 10 students thought that they were super excited to analyze graphic novel, 27 students thought that they were excited to analyze graphic novel, 15 students thought that they were interested to analyze graphic novel, 3 students thought that they were quite interested to analyze graphic novel and none thought that that analyzing graphic novel was not interested at all. Since more than 50% of total respondents are interested to analyze graphic novel, it is signals that more students probably take graphic novels as their object of study

### 1.3. Students' Understanding in Analyzing Graphic Novels

Figure 3. Students' view on how helpful Graphic Novels to understand literature The next focus in this study is to identify perception about benefit of reading graphic novel. As it can be seen from Figure 5, there were 19 students thought that it was extremely helpful, 24 students thought that it was very helpful, 10 students thought that it was helpful, 2 students thought that it was quite helpful and none thought that it was not so helpful. As it is shown in the figure, more than 80% of total respondents thought graphic novel helps them understand more about literature

## CONCLUSION

From the data findings, it can be concluded that graphic novels can be used as material for literary texts in the classroom. The results of the study show that students can understand graphic novels quite easily, they can accept its use in class, and it also helps their understanding of literature. This indicates that the use of graphic novels can be an alternative literary material in this current age of visual. The acceptance rate of students

indicates that they are also familiar with this type of text because graphic novels are closely related to pop culture.

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