Students' Problems in Semantic Meaning Analysis of Literary Works in English Handbooks

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Abstract

English handbooks used in High schools fill with literary works. It is either in poem, prose, or drama. These literary works are human's creatures both in spoken and written language which fills with implicit meaning beneath the stylistic language used in that literary works. Besides, semantics is a branch of linguistics that studies meaning. This study aimed to find out problems faced by students in the analysis of the semantics meaning of literary works found in English handbooks. This study applied the qualitative descriptive method. The result showed that the problems faced by students lied beneath the determination of semantics meanings and their types found in words, phrases, clauses, and sentences in literary works.

Keywords: semantics, handbook, literary work, meaning

INTRODUCTION

The position of language as the main medium for human communication has a very important role, both for communication among members of the community in the same environment or region, as well as with other community members in other parts of the world. English as an international language, has a very strategic role in communicating between nations. In that role, English is used in various sectors of human life, such as in the fields of education, social, economic, cultural, agricultural, defense-security, and so on.

In education sector, literary works has its own function as a learning media in teaching process. These literary works can be short story, song, poem, story-review, etc. As a teacher, or lecturer who teaches reading courses, of course, this works are familiar things to see in handbook. Literary works are the result of works of art produced by writers from events that occur around them or even the results of their personal experiences which are then poured into written form that is full of beautiful and poetic language.

Literature uses language that has aesthetic value or beauty in it (Darwin et al., 2021). Aside from being reading material for the public, literary works are also widely used as one of the objects chosen as English learning media. Learning to read literary legends is one of the basic competencies in the VIII grade junior high school (SMP) curriculum (Nisa, 2019). This is because

literary works are writings that reflect the social life of society
and human culture which can directly or indirectly provide various experiences that can be learned and have moral values or character education for the readers.

The teaching and learning process at school has not been able to shape the graduates as whole persons who reflect the character and the culture of the nation (Sekewael et al., 2016). Therefore, one solution to achieve character-building at school is by using literary works which contain moral values as learning materials for students. These works are not just learning materials but also a tool to sharpen students' awareness and emotion in communing with their surroundings.

Literature cannot be separated from linguistics because literature uses linguistics to convey content and moral messages and their beauty to the reader. Literary works are also widely used as learning media, both at the level of primary education to tertiary institutions. Therefore, prospective teachers must know how to analyze literary works both from the intrinsic and extrinsic elements. Semantics is a branch of linguistics is an approach that is extrinsic and is linguistic in the realm of linguistics. Semantics investigates the meaning of language, both lexical, grammatical, and contextual meaning (Muslimin, 2011).

The purpose of this study is to find out the problems and provide solutions to the obstacles faced by students in finding and determining the types and analysis of meaning in learning media in English handbooks used by high schools students.

The study of meaning can be undertaken in various ways. Linguistic semantics is an attempt to explicate the knowledge of any speaker of a language that allows that speaker to communicate facts, feelings, intentions, and products of the imagination to other speakers and to understand what they communicate to him or her (W. Kreidler, 1998). So, behind meanings lies speakers' intention, and any other things that appeared in their minds when they speak the language. But if the language users in speaking to each other do not understand each other the meaning in the speech, then language speech cannot run communicatively. Here, it is required that the speaker and the interlocutor must understand each other the meaning of the language they speak.

The difficulty in analyzing the meaning of words is since not always "the signifier" and the "signified" are one-to-one. That is, each linguistic sign has only one meaning. However, sometimes the relationship is one against two or more or two or more against one (Chaer, 2012). In addition, saying that the analysis of language errors at the semantic level, it can be understood that semantics is closely related to meaning (Agustina & Oktavia, 2019). As a study of meaning, then as mentioned before, semantics can reveal what the speaker intends to convey through the meaning of the conversation.

Semantics examines symbols or signs that express meaning, the relationship of meaning to one another, and its influence on humans. Therefore, semantics includes words, their development, and changes (Solikhah et al., 2020). In examining the semantics symbols, the speaker needs to express the language either in spoken or written language, the meaning of the language shown in the structured symbols conveyed by the speaker.

Meaning Type

Semantics as a study of meaning has various types, as follows:

1. denotative

Denotative meaning is a word or group of words based on a straightforward designation of something outside the language or based on certain objective conventions.

2. Grammatical

The grammatical meaning is the meaning that arises because of combining a word in a sentence. Grammatical meaning can also arise as a result of grammatical processes such as affixation, reduplication, and composition.

3. Lexical

Lexical meaning (or semantic meaning, external meaning) is the meaning of a word that stands alone both in basic form and in complex form (derivative) and the existing meaning remains as what we can see in the dictionary.

4. connotative

Connotative meaning arises from the association of our feelings with the spoken or heard word. Connotative meaning is the meaning used to refer to other forms or meanings that are outside the lexical meaning.

5. Contextual

Contextual meaning arises from the relationship between speech and situation. Contextual meaning is also called structural meaning because the process and grammatical unit are always related to the grammatical structure.

6. Broad

Broad meaning is a broad, general conceptual meaning that includes several specific or narrow conceptual meanings. For example, the school in the sentence "Our school won." This includes not only the building but also the teachers, students, and administrative staff of the school concerned.

7. Narrow

The narrow meaning is the conceptual, distinctive, and narrow meaning. For example, if you say "linguist", then you don't mean all experts, but someone who has expertise in the field of language.

8. Proverb

For example: like water on taro leaves, like transparent on the tip of the horns, like backs missing the moon, like father like son, and so on.

9. Figurative Language

Figurative Language or what is commonly called figurative language has various implicit meanings. The delivery also has its characteristics that can be conveyed both orally and in writing.

The role of semantics is very important in literary studies, especially in the study of meaning in style and the background of the process of its. Thus, layers of meaning can occur in literary works where literal meaning units are explicitly represented by the linguistic form used, the author's imaginary world, the world is seen from a certain point of view, and the layers of the world or messages that are metaphysical which can also be said to be meaning. implied.

Semantic is an important branch of linguistics that is interesting to be studied, especially when it is applied to literary works, such as songs or poems, etc (Trisnasari, I. & Umalekhoa, 2017). Besides using literary works, semantics also can be applied in social life. Factors like need, semantic similarity, and factors of social and psychological considerations (e.g. prestige, taboo) seem to be the potent factors at interplay in semantic change (Al-Athwary, 2016). The first two, i.e. need and semantic similarity, are the most common reasons in most types of semantic change.

Helping children develop a love for literature and storytelling involves more than selecting and reading a book. Effective storytellers use knowledge of children's growth in all areas of development (i.e., physical-motor; emotional; social; cognitive), knowledge of the cultures of families within the program and the community, and an understanding of individual differences to select a story (Zeece, 1997). In other words, this is a way of improving children's character in the early stages.

Fairy tales in children's literature have gradually shifted from an oral storytelling tradition to a mass media product. Telling fairy tales to children is still relevant and can help to install character values in young children (Rahman, 2017). It happens nowadays in this digital era in which, young people mostly learn visually through digital media, so that the literary works have to be transmitted to digital form too to create more lively works. Of course, the purpose is to improve students' interest in literary works. This is in line with Pulimeno's research in 2020, where she found that from a pedagogic point of view, tales convey basic values useful for children's lives.

From a didactic perspective, properly chosen storybooks represent a valuable resource for school activities, improving students' language skills and building up a friendly/respectful classroom environment. Children's stories are also used by health professionals for therapeutic purposes (bibliotherapy) to prevent unhealthy habits and addictions or address psychosomatic disorders. Finally, storybooks and web-based/digital stories can be an effective vehicle for health content, to encourage the adoption of healthy lifestyles among schoolchildren (Pulimeno et al., 2020).

The meaning contained in words, phrases, or sentences in poetry can be in the form of meanings associated with something outside the language. Through the study of associative meanings, the meaning of words, phrases, or sentences can be known from another point of view

(Irbah et al., 2020). Thus, different points of view of a character in a story will create multiple different meaning changes.

The poem "Tintrim" by Lelana Brata in the anthology Gegurit Sewindu Pustaka Candra deserves to be taught to vocational students because it contains a lot of mental maturity development so that it can be used as an example for students as well as student motivation to learn (Yulianingrum, 2013). Here, it is proof that a literary work can create psychological development in children so that it can build children's character.

In analyzing literary works, there are two (2) types of approaches used (Wellek & Warren, 1956), namely; intrinsic approach and extrinsic approach. Analysis with an intrinsic approach is applied by analyzing the intrinsic elements of the literary work itself, such as; characters, characterizations, plots, and so on; while the extrinsic approach is used by analyzing external elements related to the literary work to be analyzed, for example; the socio-cultural life in the work, the religious, the moral lessons or the language in the literary works.

It is always asserted that literary writers do not write in vacuums, they usually present literary work to serve as a mirror of life to evoke a universal human experience, and most of the time, to relay things that happen to human beings (Akinola & Olatipe, 2016). Therefore, literary work is a mirror of the life of human beings where the writer lives. In the work, the writer expresses all feelings, attitudes, actions, and emotions of people in his or her era.

In teaching materials there are learning materials that must be studied, observed, material that will be studied and mastered by students (Kurniawati, T., Kusumaningsih, C., & Rhamadiyanti, 2016). Learning materials in the form of literary works of course use language as a medium of communication to convey the content of the work. Thus, to express the meaning of language in the form of words, phrases, and sentences, a semantic approach is used in analyzing the meaning of language in literary works in English teaching materials.

Learning activities will not run properly if it is not supported by learning media. One of the learning media that cannot be separated from learning activities is textbooks. As a medium and source of learning, textbooks can transform knowledge and life values related to the basic competencies being taught. In a foreign language context, English is taught mostly in the classroom. Providing a lot of exposure should be considered by the teachers. A textbook is one of the ways that can be used in the process of teaching-learning English (Anggraeni, A., & Rachmijati, 2015).

The discovery of various types of semantic meanings in literary works found in the English handbook as teaching materials. The types of semantics meaning found in the English Handbook for high school were literal and non-literal meaning. These meanings did not appear together in one literary work, but it is spread in the literary works found in the English handbooks (Syarifuddin & Hasyim, 2020). These types of meanings are varied depending on the language in the literary work analyzed.

Schools are recommended as one proposed venue for providing these services to children and youth. As such, teachers need easy-to-use basic information about mental health resources that are viable, yet rely on minimal professional support and supervision (Heath et al., 2017). Therefore, by providing clean literary works for children, teachers also provide character education at once.

Learning materials in the high school handbooks that provide literary works, are as follows:
1. Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris untuk Siswa SMA/MA Kelas XI.2 Yrama Widya Publisher
   • Sleeping Child by MLTR (song)
   • The Boy who Cried "Wolf" (Fable)
2. English Alive: Senior High School, Grade XII.3, Yudhistira Publisher
   • August Rush, Reviewed by Jeffrey Chen (Story-Review)
   • Ryan Lochter on Course for Second Gold (Story-Review)
   • The Lion and the Dolphin (Fable)
3. English for Senior High School Students XI Science and Social Study Programme: Jakarta. Grasindo Publisher
   • The Queen of the Adriatic (Short Story)
   • Jaguar (Short Story)

The reason for choosing the seven titles of literary works in the teaching materials is that the seven materials in the handbooks are considered to have represented the genres of literary works that most often appear in English teaching materials. These handbooks, of course, are used in high school.

METHOD

This study used the qualitative descriptive method. The qualitative descriptive method is a method that makes a description or picture to understand the phenomenon of what is experienced by the research subject such as behavior, perception, motivation, action, and others (Moleong, 2019). This research method was chosen because the research data is described based on the facts obtained in the form of writing, which is then analyzed and interpreted objectively and finally described in the form of beautiful words and language as a characteristic of literary works. The population in this study were two classes with a total of 74 fifth semester students (5) at the English Education Study Program, Faculty of Letters, Universitas Muslim Indonesia. From the population, five (5) samples were drawn from each class. This sampling was carried out on the basis that the sample had passed the Introduction to Literature and Semantics (purposive sampling) courses. Field observations are carried out by documenting and recording directly or indirectly to find symptoms or phenomena faced by students when analyzing semantic meaning in learning media in the form of literary works in English teaching materials. After the results of the observations were known, the researcher then distributed questionnaires to students to find out the phenomena and difficulties they faced when analyzing the semantic meaning in learning media in English handbooks.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section fills with what has been found in the research and its analysis.

Findings

The result of questionnaire distributed to respondents were made as findings of this study. This questionnaire result using Likert Scale analysis showed the effectiveness of using literary works as learning materials found in the English handbooks.

Tabel 1. The Questionnaire result of using literary works as learning materials in Semantics Course

Total of Respondents				
SA (5)	A (4)	N (3)	D (2)	SD (1)
2	7	-	1	-
10	28	0	2	0
Score Total				40

The total of the highest score (Y) for **strongly agree** was 5 x 10 = 50, meanwhile, the lowest score for the item (X) **disagree** was 2 x 10 = 20. Thus, if the total score of respondents is achieved in 1000, so the score of respondents' interpretation toward the effectiveness of literary works to be learning materials in English handbooks in semantics course can be known by using the formula of Index, as follows:

Formula of Index % = Score total / Y x 100
So, the effectiveness of fable:
= Score Total / Y x 100
= 40/50 x 100
= 80%   It is categorized in **AGREE**

Therefore, the using of literary works, in this case, ten (10) items of literary works found in the English handbook for high schools as learning materials in Semantic course. This course is taught in the fifth semester (5th), Program Study of English Education, Faculty of Letters, Universitas Muslim Indonesia (UMI) Makassar, and this was categorized as effective.

Discussion

The points that appear in the questionnaire in this study include (i) the activeness of students in learning when literary works are used as learning media in semantic learning; (ii) the effectiveness of literary works as teaching materials; (iii) new things that respondents get from literary works as learning media and teaching materials.

Based on table 1, the use of literary works as teaching material in English courses, especially semantics, fifth-semester students (5) English Education study program, Faculty of Letters, Universitas Muslim Indonesia (UMI) is categorized as effective. This can be seen in the highest number of questionnaire respondents in the category, **AGREE**, which is as many as seven (7) respondents. In addition, the results of the interpretation of the respondent's questionnaire regarding the constraints and effectiveness of the use of literary works as teaching materials in this study used the interpretation index value which was in the category **AGREE**. Based on the Likert

scale, the index of the effectiveness of using literary works as
teaching materials in handbooks for students of the English Education Study Program, Faculty of Letters, Universitas Muslim Indonesia (UMI) Makassar is at the level of 80%, which on the Likert Scale, this index scale is in the Agree category. In other words, 80% of the fifth semester (5) students of the English Education Study Program, Faculty of Letters, Universitas Muslim Indonesia agree or are happy to use literary works, such as; songs/lyrics, short stories, fables, and story-reviews were used in this study.

By using the questionnaire provided, it was found that there were problems that became obstacles for respondents in finding the type of semantic meaning in literary works as teaching materials in this study.

From the questionnaire, it is found that regarding to respondents being encouraged to actively learn if lecturers use literary works as teaching materials for semantic courses in class. For this item, it is clear to see that almost all students agree, even most of them strongly agree that if the semantic class is in the fifth semester, lecturers should use literature as a medium learning. In another side, regarding to searching for words, phrases, sentences as data containing the type of semantic meaning in literary works, it is found that students expressed agreement or pleasure, some added that learning semantic courses using teaching materials as learning media was very easy.

The problems faced by students in analyzing semantic meaning in literary works in the handbooks lied on the level of the words, phrases, or clauses that contain semantic meaning. Sometimes in finding and determining the semantic meaning, respondents find it difficult to distinguish between phrases and clauses. In terms of differentiating types of meaning, some respondents found difficulties in distinguishing between lexical and grammatical meanings. The solution given by the researcher is to review the material related to the type of meaning to the respondent before conducting and determining the type and analysis of meaning. Besides, respondents were not familiar with proverbs or figurative language found in the literary works. They need depth analysis for these types of meaning.

Besides the problems, the researcher also analyze the effectiveness item as stated in the questionnaire. It is found that regarding the effectiveness of the use of literary works as material in teaching materials in English courses, Semantics in the English Education study program, Faculty of Letters UMI is felt to be effective because of the positive response and activeness of students during the research process.

CONCLUSION
This study resulted in findings in the form of problems faced by respondents in analyzing semantic meaning in determining the semantic meaning at the level of wording, phrases, or clauses. These obstacles can be overcome by providing a review of the previous lecture materials for Introduction to Literature and Semantics courses. The suggestions that can be submitted are in the hope that literary works can be used as learning media in teaching Semantics courses. This is intended to make it easier for students to understand the implementation of semantics course in the field where the students have their internship or work as teacher.

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