



Adapting the Graphic Novel to Improve Speaking Fluency for EFL Learners

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Abstract— This study examines the viability of the literature in terms of escalating English speaking fluency for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. The focus of this study applied graphic novels as a particular research object. As part of literature, the graphic novel has become one of the resources allowing learners to access attractive, inspired, conceptual, and artistic encounters for learners. This study used a quantitative method focused on online class observation and survey analysis aiming to reveal the impact of literature on EFL learners to speak, outline the potency of graphic novels, escalate their speaking skills, and boost their fluency. Even though the graphic novel is not commonly used in English-speaking classrooms, apparently it has been successful in delineating the students' advancement and interests in persisting their English spoken ability. From this learning, EFL learners are eager to explore their experience in reading literary texts through illustration in graphic novels and associate them with English spoken discussion. As a result, this interaction enables EFL learners to build their self-confidence and critical thinking ability.

Keywords— EFL Learners; Image; Graphic Novel; Speaking

I. INTRODUCTION

Teaching speaking not only teaches students to produce spoken words to express their feelings, ideas, and thoughts but also to keep students active in negotiations as a means of using social knowledge of situations and topics [1]. Speaking refers to the ability to speak effectively in different contexts to provide information, demonstrate conception and perception, as well as to build social relationships in the form of diverse, natural, interactive, and engaging activities [2].

On the other hand, teaching conversational English to students is complicated and has great challenges to perform as EFL learners need to

overcome barriers. These barriers embroil the ability to memorize new vocabulary and to pronounce words, to reflect on grammatical awareness, to express their thoughts coherently, and to relieve their anxiety strategically. In addition, some students have not been able to speak of something abstract in terms of expressing their outspoken concepts driven to the active learners in speaking class [3].

However, in order to overcome those barriers, some strategies may be applied. One of them is by using literature as a teaching method. Literature is reliable to create language teaching more enjoyable [4]. It helps teachers to discuss grammar and sentences with their students in an interactive

way, such as prompting students to reveal their topics of interest in a roundtable discussion and encouraging them to be more expressive on controversial topics and more in-depth topics [2].

The part of literature considered as one interactive way to teach spoken English is by using graphic novel. As the part of graphic literature, graphic novel most often refers to works of creative imagination as well as visual or illustrated segments [5]. Graphic novel involves images and text as well to tell the story. The images help the reader or viewer to understand not only the context or story as a whole but they also give us many implications or reactions [6]. These implications or reactions apply to increased speech.

Here, students are asked to expand and analyze their understanding of the story in spoken/verbal language in small discussions or in front of the classroom. Discussing literature through graphics allows students to not only develop their creativity in building their perspective but also enables students to be more critical and outspoken [7]. In addition, students are also inquired to improve their vocabulary and pronunciation during the discussion [8]. From these possibilities, writer then formulated several research questions as follows: how to identify the use of literature to teach speaking to EFL learners, how to recognize the potential of graphic novel to improve speaking skills for EFL learners and how to understand students' perceptions of learning literature through graphics or images in advancing speaking competence for EFL learners.

The preceding study toward this object was conducted by Kennedy (2020) focusing on the effect of the scaffolding reading experience using a graphic novel to enhance reading competency and reading motivation of Thai EFL students. On his study, Kennedy found that the SRE using graphic novels was able to improve students' reading comprehension at a statistically significant levels and develop intrinsic motivation [9]. Meanwhile, this object has not been proved yet to be taken for speaking competency which does not only involve literary text to indulge students' ability

The purpose of this study are to identify the use of literature to teach speaking for EFL learners, to acknowledge the potency of graphic literature to escalate speaking skills for EFL learners and to perceive students' perception of studying literature

through graphic literaturea in advancing speaking competence for EFL learners.

II. METHOD

This research used the quantitative method that focuses on data analysis through online class observation and surveys (polling and Google form). This method was conducted to identify the effectiveness of teaching strategies by applying graphic novel in advancing spoken English competence for EFL learners. The data was conducted from July until December 2021 and addressed to 118 students of first-year English literature students at Halu Oleo University, Kendari who took Basic Speaking as one of their subjects. After the course, teachers prompted the students to fill in an online form as a part of a reflection on the learning feedback in multiple choice and scale consisting of what level of interest EFL learners had toward the course and the teacher's method of teaching, the level of satisfaction towards the content of the graphic novel, and their enthusiasm adapting the graphic novel as one of the tools to enhance their speaking ability [6]. In addition, either online classroom survey (class polling) or partly brief interview were also taken in order to complete the data analysis.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. *The Use of Literature to Teach Speaking for EFL Learners*

Reading, writing, listening, and speaking are four core language abilities that are taught through literature. When employing literature in the language classroom, however, skills should never be taught in isolation, but rather as part of a whole. English Literature may introduce students to a variety of topics, including not only the English language but also English learning and culture. English literature captures some features of English culture. Of course, this is clear when studying Shakespeare's works or the works of eighteenth and nineteenth-century writers, poets, and playwrights. This is also true when looking at other works of English literature. Allusions and references and certain areas of English culture can be taught to students.

The use of literature in the EFL classrooms has advantages in several major fields [10]. Literature is beneficial for language development. It is an excellent resource for accurate speech, a variety of texts, and passionate stories [4]. Literature deals with accurate speech because it is related to real circumstances [11]. The language used in literature is the language of its audience, so it should not be inaccurate [12]. Also, literature deals with different moods and circumstances, so different forms of speech are popular [13]. In fact, speaking and writing by people are different. Therefore, literature has all these different forms of speech using the law [7]. It has its own heat, literature has the value of the text when it is read [3]. Engagement is generally considered an important element of the learning environment, especially in English learning.



Fig 1. Graphic novels for Middle Grade

Reading literature promotes students' knowledge of English as a second language of culture and society [14]. This knowledge is not easily acquired from other sources; it is too complex to capture any part of the interpretive writing.

Language is related to culture [8]. In other words, the language is the bearer of cultural messages. As such, literature is very important when employed in language teaching. Literature is culture. The novels are often based on the perspective of one major personality suffering from developmental pain [6]. This makes reading literary texts a radically different experience from reading interpretive articles, the most common type of literature in reading English as a second language [15]. There is no doubt that "the English language curriculum is a place to enjoy and think about [13].

In this way, the literature provides a good source and background for the background of these activities. A good story book not only informs EFL students about events and developments, but also informs readers about their

activities to understand rather than to outline British culture and society [16]. English teachers should be familiar with the language

Using them to develop their abilities and understand language is a social phenomenon, not merely an exclusive branch of learning. This understanding of English teachers is created by literature. As teachers have found, they have transformed classrooms into a stage of genuine use of the language of communication [17]. In other words, teachers should view language as a language that enhances social acceptance and they should view English classrooms as similar to foreign languages.

The literary text explores the lives of English speakers and their feelings for some cultural stereotypes [18]. By linking religion, superstition and folklore; that is, through culture, students explore the hidden aspects of English culture. Through the sharing of reading experiences, students recognize how people treat and respond to the same literary work in different ways [3]. Students find the social and historical context of their activities and are familiar with culture through the processing of literary textbooks. The literary works open the eyes of students as they see how others think, interpret and act, especially what EFL students are familiar with [19]. The emphasis on the inner language when learning one language demonstrates the importance of literature in the acquisition of a foreign language. For instance, the words in the heart are actually "internal social words;" it's "the most powerful tool of intellectual mediation."

Literary is a good source for English students to develop internal speech [20]. It's literature that gives them a source of internalization of different community language practices, and the student has the opportunity to "think with the words" and participate in rehearsals of mental rehearsals and internal self-approval [21]. Therefore, literature encourages more thought, oriented and focused language learning. It exposes students to the actual use of language. In fact, literature helps move from teacher-oriented English classrooms to classroom classes where students learn because students have to work in groups [4]. In fact, literature allows students to work in the community and is intended to teach a large number of curricula. It says that group talks about literature give students an idea and understanding

that they cannot create alone [22]. In their group work, they share their awareness and support, negotiate their opinions, and that point increases their level of reasoning and critical thinking. In the use of literature, it is not a matter of help, but a matter of power that means the student's understanding [19].

Literature forces them to read more and more deeply. To understand the part of the matter before them, they must read it repeatedly and think deeply about all its parts, to discover the interrelationship between each part. Literature helps to integrate language skills into communication skills by using language in different social situations. Literature texts, especially short stories, give English teachers and learners a lot of activities before and after reading, stimulating the learning imagination and creating creativity [19]. For a long time, these activities remain with the learners while they remember the events of the story and try how to predict what they will happen.

The use of literature in English classrooms focuses the learners on the meaning [17]. In this sense, the language has become a means for its actual function. It is not just a means of practice. The language becomes a means in the hands of the learners, managed by them, using their background knowledge to understand the real text, or as called it as the "information differences" [17]. He focuses on the "process rather than product" through the use of literature, the teacher focuses on the "not predefined negotiation" and the teacher says that it is "not a simple teacher" and that it is important for the teachers to understand the literature.

This aspect of literature corresponds to acquisition-based methodology, i.e. the input +1 theory [11]. In fact, literature helps students to improve their reading understanding of English [4]. They give students and teachers the opportunity to ask different forms of questions on the basis of their content. Through these questions, the students become fluent speakers and writers. Literary texts allow teachers to use different forms of questions to evaluate the students' understanding, such as consumption, true or false, matching and discussion. Literature develops learning strategies; they hear and read for general meaning and predict and guess the meaning of foreign words [3]. Since they need to

verbalize their own thoughts when discussing the content of the subject, they develop higher thinking abilities.

Moreover, their frequent use of words increases students, tendency to learn meaning from the context in which they appear. Remembering the words of the dictionary is useless and exhausting. This leads to failure and monotony. Literary texts provide us with many opportunities to effectively teach the use of words in different contexts. The literature helps students to go beyond the surface value and to be dim in the main values, i.e., to the extent that they are able to reach the basic values. It allows students to go beyond what is written and dive into what is meant [23].

The subject or context is an important part of the language learning process. If the subject is uninteresting and confusing, it will not inspire and stimulate students. The literature provides a subject that has the ability to motivate students and help them to explore the possibilities of custom and importance that greatly enhance their linguistic competence.

The literary texts give learners the opportunity to explore the full potential of language, which inspires them to learn a language in real life situations and communicate fluently. Traditional and mechanical language teaching methods often result in students who are simply imitative speakers and writers [20]. Literature can evoke feelings through the words it uses, helping learners break out of their usual grammatical patterns and communicate more effectively. When the student reads a literary text, he begins to take on the author's perspective. He begins reading the text. Understanding the meanings of words or phrases can be helpful, but it is more important to focus on the development of the story. The student is more interested in following the progression of events, feeling connected to the characters, and feeling their emotions as the story unfolds [15]. This can have positive effects on the whole language learning process.

It is here that the choice of literary texts according to students' needs, expectations, interests and language level becomes important. In this process, he can overcome the identity crisis and develop into an outward direction. Indeed, the subjects and topics addressed in the literature are of interest in themselves, as they are part of human experience and are treated in a way that is

designed to attract the attention of the reader. They are therefore a source of interest for British students.

One of the main elements of the learning process is the promotion of the learner's reflection. Reflection processes or rethinking are considered to be important components of learning for learners in transition [24]; [25].

The literary texts are a good way to create environments for English students to go through intellectual thinking to see why things are what they see and why things are different from their expectations or why they are different from the others they face in literature. In this way, the learners reflect their own experiences and compare how their experiences are similar or different from their expectations [21]. Of course, during this reflective process, they are emotionally engaged, which helps them to perceive the situation far better. The better your perception of the language, the more you will learn. They learn the language as they are involved in other aspects of learning. They learn English just like children learn their native language.

When acquiring native language, the child's attempt is not to learn his language. He communicates with his elders in language, meets his demands, attracts others and interacts with others around him. Literature creates exactly the same environment for British students. His main focus was on how to interact with the situation he encountered, through which he developed knowledge of English.

B. The Potency of Graphic Novel to Improve Speaking Skills for EFL Learners

Visual literacy is a complicated phrase that must be understood in the context of other forms of literacy. Visual literacy (also) entails reflecting on the meanings of visual words, as well as their critical examination, rather than just adapting to the dominant visual orders [7]. Visual literacy is defined as a process that generates meaning and action via the use of images. When children see the word 'dog,' they immediately associate it with the stereotypical image of a dog 'hat' they have in mind.

Visual pictures have a surface and deep structure, comparable to Chomsky's universal grammar. The surface structure of images is made up of visual symbols, whereas the deep structure is made up of the underlying notion beneath the

visuals. These structures are modeled after the representational system that a language uses to produce meaning [7].

When we compare visual and verbal grammar in graphic novels, we can see that visual images use the same sources to construct meaning as words. Visual images have the same ideational, interpersonal, and textual meaning as a verbal language. They have ideational/representational meaning in terms of informing what happened, who the participants are, what their responsibilities are, and under what conditions the event occurs in an image [7]. In order to be visually literate, it is necessary to comprehend not only the meaning of images, but also the nature of how image representation systems work. Images are classified as representational, analogical, or arbitrary [1]. The physical similarities between the symbolic representations and the material they depict are striking. Analogical pictures, on the other hand, share some characteristics with their antecedents in various ways. Typically, visuals make the nature of the objects being compared more valuable.

Speaking ability is developed during this period. The illustrations in graphic literature aid students in comprehending the tale and setting (the words give the learners a dialogue and its details). They can assist students improve their vocabulary and broaden their perspectives on the subject [5]. Through images, students are able to construct their understanding from written or text into oral/verbal languages [27]. In here, students are given a freedom to be more creative in their exploration of the topic's material so that this enables them to improve their visual literacy skill.

Students' Perception towards Graphic Novel

In order to perceive student's perception of studying literature through graphic novel in advancing speaking competence for EFL learners, the researcher classified the ways into two, as follow:

2. Level of effort and Interests

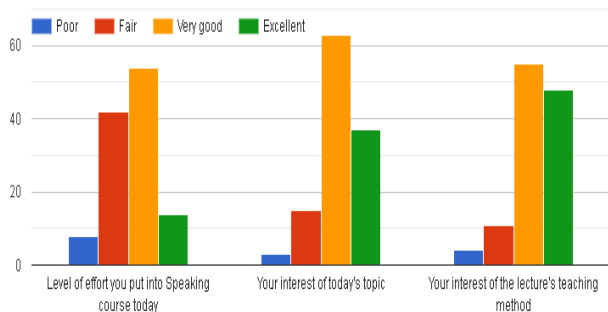


Fig. 1 Students' effort and interests toward Graphic Novel

Based on graphic above, the majority of students from English Literature at Halu Oleo University claimed that they were enthusiastic in learning speaking through graphic literature. They agreed that learning literature through graphic literature enables them to boost up their interest and motivation in speaking class. Teacher also found that graphic novel is a visually appealing way to explain a certain topic as it has a variety of features that may help students learn more effectively than standard textbooks [6]. There are some conditions why graphic literature is assumed as a cool communication media with a high level of engagement. One of them is because communication receivers or students must "fill in" or use their imaginations to finish the communication [16]. Although the lines in graphic literature, such as novels or comics, are not exactly realistic depictions of people or movement, we "see" individuals who are moving when we look at them because we participate in the medium by "filling in the blanks." When we see the three letters b, a, and m accompanied with an action drawing, we may even "hear" a "BAM" sound in our heads [28]. What you see is what you get in hot media like television, but what you receive in cool media is what you make of the medium.

For EFL students, the challenge may arise not only from the complexity of learning a new language, but also from the complexity of learning a new culture. There is indication reveals that students may face various socio-cultural factors affecting English-language learning. Unlike paragraphs with only text, the visual side of the cartoon panel shows how speakers use facial expressions, gestures and gestures in their statements. Like traditional novels, short stories, poetry, comics and graphic novels, cartoons and graphic novels reinforce cultural values, such as

how children communicate with their parents and peers and how to deal with a wide range of social issues [6]. The visual nature of comics and graphic novels helps students to infer and connect to their daily lives in ways that are not possible with dedicated resources. Besides that, students studying literature are not limited to English traditions; they may be introduced to traditions that inform English literature, such as the study of Ancient Greek play, as well as literature from other cultures, such as American literature. It also gives students an alternative to the pervasiveness of a culture that is characterized by its immediacy and shallowness.

Students' interest may also escalate not only linguistic aspects such as vocabulary items but also how language can be employed for specific and aesthetic reasons when studying literature. Students' ability to recognize and use the concepts of beat, meter and rhythm might help them enhance their own writing. Finally, studying literature can provide students with a new and innovative perspective on their schoolwork and lives in general or in daily conversation.

2. Level of Potency to Enhance Speaking Skill

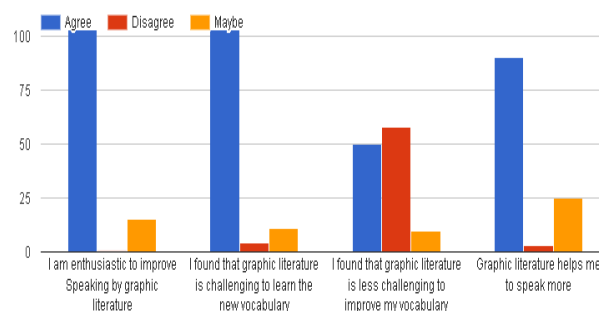


Fig. 2 Students' perception towards graphic novel

From the table above, most students agreed that graphic literature is potential to improve their speaking skill. They found that its content helped them to create their imagination and encourage them to think critically towards every questions that may appear during the discussion [29]. Besides, graphic literature is challenging to learn new vocabulary. Images are beneficial to construct their words and sentences to be transferred into oral language [30]. Graphic novels are non-simplistic stories with limited text and rich images. According to research, learners that participate in learning graphic literature reap numerous benefits, including: extensive exposure to advanced vocabularies, readers with low language skills will

benefit from the combination of pictures and text, critical thinking and comprehension abilities are being developed, increased knowledge of literary terms, techniques, and elements [31]. Furthermore, the exploration of historical and contemporary social and cultural issues is achieved and it could make a wonderful framework for learning speaking English. In reading graphic novel, students are engaging with highly complex and structured narrative forms. Whether they realize it or not, their emergent visual literacy promotes thinking skills and develops wider metacognitive abilities. It does not only motivates children to read more widely, but also enables them to enjoy a richer imagined world when reading comics, text based stories and their own written work [32]. Students could experience this skill and practice in daily activities by spoken English. In addition, graphic novels have a long way to go in supporting well-developed plots, stories, and characters, and can teach complex topics suitable for older students. One way to teach students about the Holocaust is by using Art Spiegelman's graphic novel "Maus." This book tells the story of a Holocaust survivor, and it is a fascinating way to learn about this tragic event. Wing's literacy lessons using graphic novels are much more available than textbooks and even inspire his students to pursue their own Holocaust studies [15]. The use of illustrated books, such as graphic novels, helps older students to learn about topics that are of interest and relevance to them, while providing visual support for decoding.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This research concluded that literature has been proven as a great tool to approach English language and English learning or culture. Besides that, graphic literature is proven and potential to escalate speaking skills for EFL learners since most students are enthusiastic to use graphic literature to improve their speaking and help them to speak more.

Graphic novels may not be traditional classroom texts, but they offer a lot of opportunities for English language learners. They are helpful for students when studying concrete literacy concepts, such as inflection, emphasis, and punctuation, or more abstract ideas, such as complex social issues, innuendo, and cultural norms. Moreover, they are

also appropriate for EFL learners to help them decode new information, make inferences, and learn more about an unfamiliar culture.

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