

Volume 13 No. 1, 2024

Article Received: August 15, 2024

Accepted: September 26, 2024

Available Online: September 30, 2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25077/jlk.13.1.34-42.2024>

## Readers and Text Interaction: Reader Responses to the Plot Twist in the Stories about Sherlock Holmes

**Gina Hanifa Devara**

English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Andalas

Email: [ginadevara.student.sasingunand@gmail.com](mailto:ginadevara.student.sasingunand@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

This research discusses how the readers' responses to plot twists in several Sherlock Holmes stories influence their reading interest and curiosity in other Sherlock Holmes stories and other mystery works. The aim is to find the relationship between knowledge of the plot and interest in reading Sherlock Holmes books among English Department students at Andalas University, 2022 generation. The results show that most respondents were familiar with plot twists and mystery stories. It proves that the students think plot twists in stories are trendy and can increase their interest in reading other mystery stories.

Keywords: *Plot twist, Sherlock Holmes, Mystery Stories, reading interest, reader responses.*

### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini membahas bagaimana tanggapan pembaca terhadap plot twist dalam beberapa cerita Sherlock Holmes mempengaruhi minat baca dan rasa ingin tahu mereka terhadap cerita-cerita Sherlock Holmes lainnya dan karya-karya misteri lainnya. Tujuannya adalah untuk menemukan hubungan antara pengetahuan tentang alur cerita dan minat membaca buku Sherlock Holmes di kalangan mahasiswa Jurusan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Andalas, angkatan 2022. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar responden akrab dengan plot twist dan cerita misteri. Ini membuktikan bahwa para siswa berpikir bahwa plot twist dalam cerita itu tren dan dapat meningkatkan minat mereka untuk membaca cerita misteri lainnya.

Kata kunci: *Plot twist, Sherlock Holmes, Cerita Misteri, minat baca, tanggapan pembaca.*

### INTRODUCTION

Studies on English literary works will never end. With the development of English literature programs in many universities in the world, interest in studying literature in English also increases. Knowledge about literature and how to deal with works of literature empower readers in understanding literature (Ferdinal et al., 2020). Such as action to literature helps improve their understanding about different themes, including racism (Pratama et al., 2023),

violence and trauma (Wipi & Ferdinal, 2022), body as a manifesto (Dewi et al., 2024), human rights (Ferdinal, 2020), and history (Yasee-ngo & Ferdinal, 2023).

Learning works of literature can be pursued through different perspective, either objective, expressive, pragmatic or mimetic analysis (Abrams). From pragmatic point of view, a reader response studies has invited many researchers to concentrate. Interest in this field include the use of reader response criticism in EFL teaching (Saeid, 2021), looking at Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four from a reader response analysis (Aishah & Sandika, 2021), readers response approach to Poe's works (Febrin, 2022), and students' responses to plot (Gindho & Nabila, 2023). Interest in studying the works of particular authors also shows its significance. Investigating world class writers such as Shakespeare (English literature), Hawthorne (American literature), Achebe (African literature), Gabriel Garcia Marquez (Colombian literature), atau Haruki Murakami (Japanese literature) indicates its trends nowadays. In English literature, interest in the works of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle also rises up. Readers interest in studying his detective Sherlock Holmes has been one of them, such as the issues of industrial revolution in the actions of Sherlock Holmes (Nasrul & Dina, 2022) and reading Sherlock Holmes (Tobin, 2006).

Plot is an intrinsic element that refers to a series of interconnected events forming a narrative in a literary work. The storyline in fiction is built to a climax and ends with a resolution. In literature, a plot twist is an unexpected turn of events in a story that can change the direction or outcome of the storyline from what was expected. Plot twists are a popular narrative technique often used in works of fiction. They are designed to disrupt the audience's expectations or predictions. The authors achieve this twist in the storyline by providing a big surprise that is completely unexpected or perhaps foreshadowed through previous details or events (Literary Terms, 2015).

Sherlock Holmes is a character created by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in his stories about Sherlock Holmes' experience and intelligence in solving a case. The character of Sherlock Holmes first appeared in the novel 'A Study in Scarlet' in 1887. This book was updated in 1914-1915 with the title 'The Valley of Fear.' Sherlock Holmes is a consulting detective renowned for his intelligence and extraordinary powers of observation. Together with his friend, Dr. John H. Watson, Holmes solves seemingly unsolvable cases. Sherlock Holmes series consists of four novels and fifty-six short stories published in various collections.

These books contain many interesting things that we can research and learn more about. They are also very famous among fans of mystery stories, even the general public. They have many mysterious stories and story lines that are difficult to predict. The works of

Sherlock Holmes are not only famous for their strong characters but also for their interesting and unpredictable plots. Holmes' logical thinking and detailed observations have inspired many other works of detective and crime fiction throughout literary history.

The popularity of these books makes us curious about other people's responses to this book. How the readers respond to the plot twist in the Sherlock Holmes stories influences the reader's reading interest and curiosity about other Sherlock Holmes stories and other mystery works. Readers understand the plot in Sherlock Holmes' works and how the plot does not match readers' predictions, so curiosity arises about Sherlock Holmes's other works, and readers will guess what plot will happen. There are many questions about readers' responses and feelings towards this book.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

The method used in the research in the stories of Sherlock Holmes is a reader response approach with quantitative and qualitative methods. The Reader response focuses on the reader and how the readers engage with the text. Qualitative and quantitative methods were used in this research, considering that this research focuses on interest in reading mystery stories with many unexpected plot twists, like Sherlock Holmes. Data collection was carried out through a questionnaire distributed to English literature students at the Faculty of Humanity, Andalas University batch of 2022 who had taken some prose courses.

Data were collected by filling out questionnaires that had to be filled out by the students regarding knowledge of the storyline, the mystery genre, and increased interest in reading mystery literary works after reading stories about Sherlock Holmes. Communication was carried out online via WhatsApp and Google Forms. This research required active participation from both the researcher and respondents. Research regarding understanding the plot or plot twist and increasing interest in reading after getting a plot twist in a story was considered important.

## **RESULTS & DISCUSSION**

The data were collected through questionnaires from 27 respondents from the English Department class of 2022. These respondents were chosen because they practiced for a drama course and analyzed the roles and function of plot in literature. Each respondent was asked to answer 7 questions regarding their know-how about plot (3 questions), reading the stories

about Sherlock Holmes (2 questions), love for mystery stories (2 questions). All questions were in Bahasa Indonesia.

The English versions of the questions are as follows.

1. Do you understand the plot of a story?
2. Are you familiar with plot twists at the end of a story?
3. Have you ever read stories about Sherlock Holmes?
4. How are you interested in the plot twists at the end of the stories of Sherlock Holmes?
5. Other than the stories of Sherlock Holmes, in what other genres of works do you find plot twists?
6. Are you interested in mystery stories?
7. After reading the stories about Sherlock Holmes, how interested are you to read similar mystery stories?

The research results show a range of varied perspectives on plot twists in the stories of Sherlock Holmes and other related aspects.

1. The first and the second questions: understanding the plot of a story and being familiar with plot twists at the end of a story.

This question was asked to investigate whether the respondents understand the plot of a story. Their responses indicates that most of them (78%) knew it. There were 14.8% who understood the plot very well, and 7.4% did not understand the plot. All respondents are familiar with plot twists. The complete percentages can be seen in the Chart 1.

Chart 1. Respondents' understanding of plot

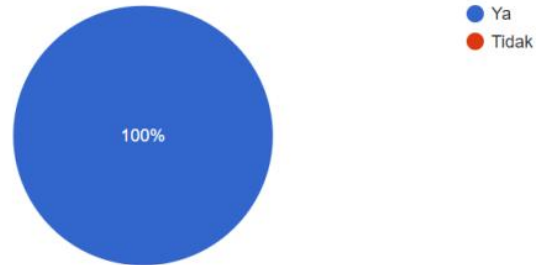


When asked whether they were familiar with the plot of a story? Different from their knowledge of the plot, all respondents have been familiar with the plot twists. None of them were unfamiliar with it, as seen in Chart 2.

Chart 2. Respondents' understanding of the plot twists

Apakah anda familiar dengan plot twist pada akhir cerita?

27 jawaban



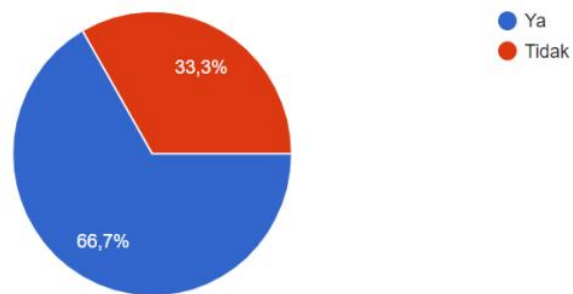
The second group of questions deal with the respondents' encounter with the stories about Sherlock Holmes: having read stories about Sherlock Holmes, being interested in the plot twists at the end of the stories of Sherlock Holmes, and reading other stories with plot twists.

When asked whether they have read stories about Sherlock Holmes, 66.7% of respondents confirmed that they had read the stories of Sherlock Holmes, and the remaining 33.3% had never read the works of Sherlock Holmes. It indicates that majority of them like reading such stories. The details can be seen in Chart 3.

Chart 3. Respondents having read stories about Sherlock Holmes

Apakah anda sudah pernah membaca kisah Sherlock Holmes?

27 jawaban

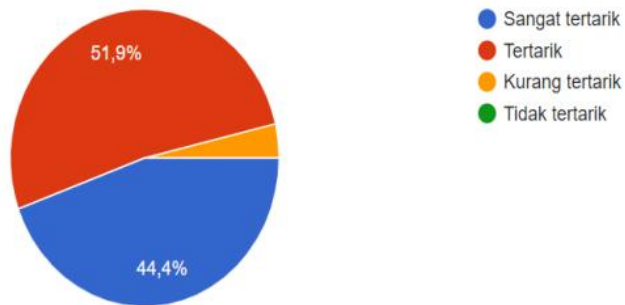


Regarding how interesting is the plot twists at the end of the stories about Sherlock Holmes to them, As many as 51.9% of respondents were interested in the plot twist in the Sherlock Holmes story, and 44.4% of respondents were very interested in the plot twist in the Sherlock Holmes story. Meanwhile, 3.7% of respondents chose to be less interested in the plot twist in the Sherlock Holmes story. The details can be seen in Chart 4.

Chart 4. The Respondent's Interest on the plot twists.

Seberapa menarik cerita dengan plot twist pada akhir cerita Sherlock Holmes untuk anda?

27 jawaban

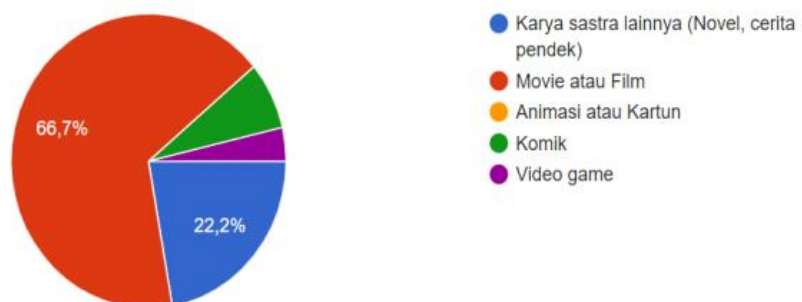


When asked whether the respondents also found other stories with similar plot twists, they also found stories with plot twists in different genres: movie or film 66.7%, other literary works 22.2%, comics 7.4%, and video games 3.7%. We can look at the details in Chart 5.

Chart 5. Respondents, Plot Twists and Other Genres

Selain pada kisah Sherlock Holmes, dimana anda menemukan cerita dengan plot twist pada akhirnya?

27 jawaban



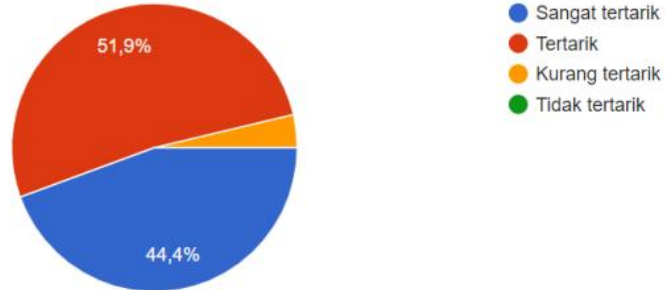
2. The third group of questions: on mystery stories and eagerness to read other stories after knowing the stories about Sherlock Holmes

Majority of the respondents (44.4%) are very interested in mystery stories, and 51.9% of them are interested in mystery stories. Meanwhile, 3.7% of respondents chose to be less interested in mystery stories. This division, whose details can be seen in Chart 6, shows that they were mystery enthusiasts.

Chart 6. Eagerness to Read Mystery Stories

Apakah anda tertarik dengan cerita misteri?

27 jawaban

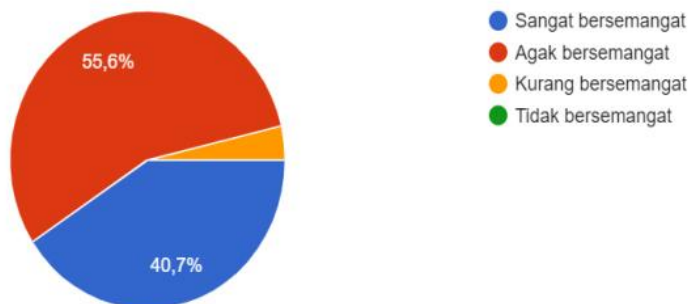


Regarding whether the respondents are enthusiastic read other mystery stories after reading the stories about Sherlock Holmes, As many as 40.7% of the respondents were very enthusiastic about continuing to read similar mystery literary works after reading Sherlock Holmes, followed by 55.6% somewhat enthusiastic, and 3.7% less enthusiastic. Chart 7 details such information.

Chart 7. Respondent’s Willingness to Read Mystery Stories after Reading Stories about Sherlock Holmes.

Seberapa bersemangatnya anda untuk lanjut membaca karya sastra misteri serupa setelah membaca Sherlock Holmes?

27 jawaban



In brief, from the answer to the 7 questions, we can say that the respondents understand the plot and plot twists and are familiar with the works of Sherlock Holmes. Plot twists that have their own charm in literary works can also be found in films, animations, comics, and even video games. So, plot twists can increase respondents' interest in reading mystery stories. Some respondents admitted that they did not know or read Sherlock Holmes and were not interested in mystery stories, there were also those who admitted that they were not interested in stories with plot twists.

## CONCLUSION

Reader response theory focuses on the reader and the way the reader engages in the text. The results of a survey of readers' responses to the plot twist in Sherlock Holmes' works prove that the plot twist in the story is able to increase interest in reading other mystery works. because almost all respondents were interested in Sherlock Holmes stories, especially those with a plot twist at the end of the story. This shows the respondent's understanding of the storyline in literary works

## REFERENCES

- Aisyah, A., & Sandika, E. (2021). The Perception of Totalitarianism and Authoritarianism in Various Universitas Andalas Students: A Reader- Response Criticism of George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four. *Linguistika Kultura: Jurnal Linguistik Sastra Berdimensi Cultural Studies*, 10(1), 1-10.
- Bedihardjo, S. S., & Ferdinal, F. (2022). Reader's Responses of the Colonized Land in Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad. *Linguistika Kultura: Jurnal Linguistik Sastra Berdimensi Cultural Studies*, 11(1), 46-58.
- Dewi, C., Ferdinal, F., & Sudarmoko, S. (2024). Tubuh sebagai Manifesto: Pandangan Politik Sally Rooney dalam Normal People. *JURNAL AL- AZHAR INDONESIA SERI HUMANIORA*, 9(2), 147-155.
- Febrin, N. A. (2022). Reader's Reception Toward Love Obsession In Edgar Allan Poe's "Ligeia": A Case Study of English Students At Andalas University. *Linguistika Kultura: Jurnal Linguistik Sastra Berdimensi Cultural Studies*, 11(1), 59-69.
- Ferdinal, Seswita, and Edria Sandika. (2020). Introduction to Literary Studies. Padang: PJ Publishing.
- Ferdinal, F. (2020). Women's Rights and Colonization in The Short Story of The Jakarta Post. *Vivid: Journal of Language and Literature*, 9(1), 1-11.
- Gindho, R, & Nabilah, D. R. (2023). Students' Responses to Plot Device of Going/Trapped to Another World Seen in The Wonderful Wizard of Oz by Frank L Baum: Reading Interest and Popular Culture Knowledge. Retrieved from <http://jurnalvivid.fib.unand.ac.id>
- Literary Terms. (2015). Plot Twist. Retrieved November 3, 2015, from <https://literaryterms.net>



- Nasrul, W. & Dina, A. (2022). The Portrayal of the Industrial Revolution in Sherlock Holmes Movies. Retrieved from <http://jim.teknokrat.ac.id>
- Pratama, Y. O., Rosa, S., & Ferdinal, F. (2023). Pandangan Pengarang Tentang Rasisme Terhadap Masyarakat Kulit Hitam Amerika dalam Novel *Sing, Unburied, Sing* Karya Jesmyn Ward. *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar*, 8(2), 6269-6291.
- Saeid, R. (2021). Integrating Reader Response Theory into EFL Classroom at Farhangian University. Retrieved from <https://ojs.upsi.edu.my>
- Tobin, V. (2006). Ways of Reading Sherlock Holmes: the Entrenchment of Discourse Blends. Research Gate
- Wipi, F. (2022). Violence and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in Hannah Kent's Burial Rites. *Andalas International Journal of Socio-Humanities*, 4(1), 16-24.
- Yasee-ngo, N., & Ferdinal, F. (2023). Perkembangan Sastra Thailand: Sebuah Tinjauan Awal The Development of Thai Literature: A Preliminary Study. *Linguistika Kultura: Jurnal Linguistik Sastra Berdimensi Cultural Studies*, 12(1), 1-10.