

Students' Perception on the Use of Poetry in a Literary Appreciation Class

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Abstract

Poetry has been used as a one of teaching media that often used in English language learning. Besides offering benefits, the use of poetry in language class gives challenges to the learners. This research aimed to find out the students' perception about the use of poetry in a Literary Appreciation class. The researcher used qualitative method and the researcher used descriptive qualitative as the design of the research. To gather the data, this researcher used interview as the data gathering technique and the interview guideline as the instrument. This research took place at one of private universities in Yogyakarta. The participants of the study were four English major students who actively joined the Literary Appreciation class. The findings of this research showed that the benefits of using poetry in English language learning were increasing vocabulary, improving pronunciation, understanding type of poetry, improving writing poetry, knowing the right intonation, understanding the meaning of poetry, and understanding figurative language. In addition, the finding also shows the challenges and the strategy. The first strategy is imitating to help the students choose the appropriate word and understanding the tone of poetry. The second is using a dictionary to help the students to know unfamiliar words. Then, asking others to help the students to understand the complicated words, unfamiliar pronunciation and choose the right word. The last is translating to help the students to know the unfamiliar vocabulary and understanding the meaning of poetry.

Keyword: poetry, benefits, challenges, students' strategy, English language learning

Background

Literature is works that have a beautiful meaning. According to Oxford Dictionary, fourth edition (2011) “literature is writings valued as works of art, especially novels, plays, and poetry” (p.258). In addition, literature is one of main sources of input for teaching in language learning and literature is an influencing and promising tool to develop language learning (Khatib, Rezaei, & Derakhshan, 2011). Literature text has much potential in term of developing different aspects of a foreign language (Bobkina & Dominguez, 2014). Therefore, students who study literature have to be able to understand some literature texts such as poetry and novel.

Poetry is a collection of sentence that every word has a deep meaning. Every word of poetry has deep meaning to raise emotional responses. According to Wilson and Dymoke (2017), one of the oldest written genres is poetry. Mittal (2014) stated that a piece of writing in which words are arranged beautifully and rhythmically is called poetry. Kong (2010) also argued that as well as music, poetry has rhyme and intense meaning.

Moreover, in many English courses, poetry is one of teaching media that is often used. Ozen and Mohammadzadeh (2012) argued that poetry has many benefits in improving vocabulary and language learning. By using poetry in teaching learning process the students can get many benefits such as exposing to rich reading material and creative language. Poetry is one of media that has many advantages for language learning process. According to Mittal (2014), poetry

offers a lot of opportunities for language teaching and practice. However, in teaching learning process poetry is not always used in English classroom. For example, in one of private universities in Yogyakarta poetry is only discussed in Literary Appreciation class in the language teaching and learning process. This Literary Appreciation class is not a compulsory course in this institution. Therefore, not all students get the experience in learning English through the use of poetry. Besides, some people thought that the poetry is a part of literature only (Mittal, 2014).

Literature Review

Literature

Literature is commonly used in language learning. According to Duff and Miley in Khatib, Rezaei, and Derakhsham (2011), in mid-1980s some practitioners and language scholars developed literature as material for language learning that had been neglected. Literature might be one of good ways to understand the culture and traditions of the target language (Bobkina & Dominguez, 2014).

Poetry

In literature classes poetry is one of study often used in language learning. Poetry is a form of literature that uses aesthetic and rhythmic words. Besides, poetry is a collection of words that have deep meaning. There are three most common types of poetry. The first is lyric poetry. Lyric poetry is a type of poetry that has strong thoughts and feelings.

The Use of Poetry in Language Learning

First, teachers can discuss the definition of poetry. Second, by giving a short story, teachers can ask to convert some lines in a poetic composition. Third, teachers can ask students to read poetry loudly, read tales and prose in poetic manner so that students can follow. Reading aloud always works well as far as pronunciation and fluency is concerned. In order to increase fluency, pronunciation and confidence, classroom practices and exercises play an important role. Fourth, vocabulary is also very important because there are many words which can only be used in poetic composition. Thus, vocabulary games and quiz containing poetic attributes also play an important role. Fifth, poetry has some unusual sentences and structures which students normally will not find in a prose. Their sentences and structure help a lot in English Language Learning (Mittal, 2014).

The Benefits of the Use of Poetry in Language Learning

Vocabulary. Writing poetry can also improve students' vocabulary. Poetry has full of words that rarely used in language classroom. According to Kellem (2009) poetry is a way to learn vocabulary. So, if a student wants to write some poetry, she or he has to know a lot of vocabulary.

Pronunciation. The sound structure and rhythms of poetry might help the students familiarize their ear to new language so that they can imitate what they hear (Kramsch & Mueller cited in Schultz, 1996). If a teacher asks the students to

retell some poetry, it can help the students to improve their pronunciation (Mittal, 2016).

Grammar. The sentences in poetry can help the students to learn grammar. According to Mittal (2014), the use of grammar is not easy for students who do not have English background, so they can use poetry as their media to learn grammar.

Writing skill. According to Lida (2012) poetry has a power to develop students' creative writing. It means that poetry can be used as teaching media to increase students' ability in writing skill.

Reading skill. Kellem (2009) stated that poetry is one of sources that has rich reading material and uses creative language. Kong (2010) also argued that if poetry is properly used in teaching process, it can be useful to develop students' reading competence.

Speaking skill. Poetry has sounds, rhyme and rhythm. If students are already confident to speak, it makes them fluent in their speaking skill (Mittal, 2016).

Increasing knowledge. When the students listen or read some poetry they will determine what kind of poetry is that or they will determine what the meaning of that poetry and also try to guess the feeling of the writer. Byars (2016) argued that teaching poetry can increase students' knowledge of the subject.

The Challenges of the Use of Poetry in Language Learning

Pronunciation. By learning poetry the students might experience difficulty in pronunciation because they find unfamiliar words (Ahmad, 2014). According to Wulandari (2016), they their difficulties related to the difficulty in pronouncing the words as they usually use Indonesian rather than English.

Lack of vocabulary. If the students want to learn a language through poetry, lack of vocabulary will be a challenge, because the students find difficult to translate from English into Indonesian (Wulandari, 2016).

Spelling. Another challenge on using poetry is the difficulty in spelling the word. In this case, the students commonly only remember how to pronounce or sound of the word, but they do not know the couple letters that have to be written (Wulandari, 2016).

Unfamiliar genre. Poetry is usually used as material in senior high school but there are a lot of students who are new to the use of poetry. According to Rees (2016), some students rarely enjoy poetry because poetry is unfamiliar genre for them.

Boredom. Some students' think that poetry is complicated reading because poetry has difficult language, so the students feel bored. Rees (2011) argued that some students think that poetry is boring; they rarely enjoy using poetry because poetry has difficult language.

Students' Strategies to Overcome the Problem in Language Learning

Asking the teacher. According to Wulandari (2016) argued that if the students do not understand about the language that they learn, they can ask that language teacher to help them to understand the language.

Imitating. According to Wulandari (2016), the student can also follow an English expression from other media such as music, movie, and Youtube, so they can understand more how to spell some words.

Bringing a dictionary. Another strategy on using poetry is the student can bring dictionary in the class, so they can find out the meaning of the unfamiliar word (Wulandari, 2016).

Using simple poetry. If the teacher uses poetry as their material, there are many students who do not enjoy joining the class. Some students thought that the language of poetry is complicated. To answer the problem is the students can ask the teacher to use simple poetry that has simple word so that the students can really understand the meaning of that poetry. According to Byars (2016), using simple poetry is more suitable for beginner.

Methodology

In conducting this research, the researcher used qualitative approach. The researcher's purpose is to find out students' perception on the use of poetry in a Literary Appreciation class and the researcher wants to explore the problem and the strategy. According to Creswell (2012) qualitative research is a suitable method to find a research problem in which the variables are not known and need

to explore. For the research design, the researcher used descriptive qualitative design. Descriptive qualitative is an action to investigate or to explain phenomena (Lambert & Lambert, 2012). The goal of descriptive qualitative is get rich information from the phenomena. According to Lambert and Lambert (2012), getting cases that are considered information-rich is the goal of descriptive qualitative.

The researcher conducted the research at one of private universities in Yogyakarta to investigate students' perception on the use of poetry in a Literary Appreciation class. There are several reasons why the researcher chose this institution as the setting. First, there is one class at this university that uses poetry as a teaching material, namely Literary Appreciation class. Besides, there is no previous research dealing with the use of poetry in this institution. In addition, the researcher has access to this institution so that it was easier to find the participants. The researcher knows about the context of the setting.

The participants of this study were the students of English Education Department of a private university in Yogyakarta. The researcher chose the students of this institution because there were many students who joined a literary appreciation class in different years using poetry in the learning process. This study used a purposive sampling technique. The researcher decided some criterion to choose the participants. First, they have joined a Literary Appreciation class and actively participated. This criterion was required because the researcher believes that the students who already joined and were active in class have experience of using poetry in their language course. Therefore, the researcher will

get suitable data based on the problem. Second, the participants are willing to be interviewed. This criterion will help the researcher to get a deep answer from the participants. The participants will answer the questions based on their experience of the research problems. The participants were four students in different years who met those criteria. The researcher believes that four participants are enough to get the data.

The researcher used interview as the data gathering method. Kvale in Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) stated that interview is communication between two or more people that aims to exchange views that are of mutual interest or human interaction in producing knowledge. The researcher chose interview as the data gathering method because interview can help the researcher to get deep data. The study used interview guideline as the instrument to gather the data. The type of the question in the interview was standardized open-ended interview type. The researcher used open-ended questions. This study used indirect approach as the question formats. Indirect approach is a general question format. According to Tuckman in Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) indirect approach is the format of questions that are indirect or in general for example the researcher can ask the respondent about what kind of benefits that students get by learning poetry in the class.

First, the researcher created the interview guideline to gather the data. The researcher chose the participants according the class teacher's recommendation. Then, the researcher contacted the four participants via Whatsapp and tries to make appointment for the interview. The researcher interviewed the participant

using Indonesian language because the researcher and participant have same first language, so that the researcher and the participant understand more and feel more convenient to ask and answer the questions. The researcher used mobile phone recorder, note, and pen.

After gathering all the data from the interviewees, the researcher transcribed or wrote the conversation of the interview to the written form. After transcribing the data into written form, the researcher did member checking or probing to all participants. If there is any unclear answer, the researcher contacts the participant to make another appointment. In this research, the researcher asked the participant to explain more for the statement that was unclear during the member checking. After the data were gained, the researcher did coding to each of the data of participants. The researcher used P1 as the first participant, P2 as the second participant, P3 as the third participant, and the last P4 as the fourth participant. After the data was clear, the researcher conducted compact fact. Saldana (2009) stated that descriptive code or compact fact is technique to paraphrase the participants' answers in orderly sentence. After that the researcher conducted interpretation. Interpretation is to make a simple word or phrase from the compact fact. Then the researcher collected the same fact. In this part the researcher collected the same answer from each participant. After that the researcher categorized the same codes. In this part the researcher agglomerated the same code in one category. The last part is that the researcher reported the finding.

Findings and Discussion

The Benefits of Using Poetry in Literary Appreciation Class

Increasing vocabulary. The first finding is related to vocabulary number. Increasing vocabulary is one of benefits of using poetry. This is in line with Kellem (2009) who argued that poetry is a way to learn vocabulary. This means the students are exposed to many words when their teacher uses poetry in their teaching process. The words might be familiar as well unfamiliar words that are used in daily life.

Improving pronunciation. The second benefit of using poetry is that the students learn how to pronounce words. The participants believed that by learning poetry, it can make the students learn pronunciation. If a teacher asks the students to retell some poetry, it can help the students to improve their pronunciation (Mittal, 2016).

Improving writing poetry. The fourth benefit is the students can know how to create poetry. Based on the interview, the participants believed that by leaning poetry they can create their own poetry. Hanauer (2010) stated that poetry writing can be used as a teaching method to teach second language literacy.

Understanding type of poetry. The third finding is the students can know the type of poetry. Poetry has most common type of poetry namely, lyric poetry, narrative poetry, and descriptive poetry. It means that the students can get information about kind of poetry.

Knowing the right intonation. The fifth finding is students can learn intonation by learning poetry. Based on the interview, one participant believed that by learning poetry in class the students can know how to read the poetry with good intonation. Khansir (2012) argued that by studying poetry, the students become familiar with the aspects of the target language such as stress, tone, and intonation.

Understanding the meaning of poetry. The sixth finding is the students can learn how to feel about the content of poetry. The participants believed that the students can know how to feel the emotion in poetry by learning poetry in class. Chamcharatsri (2013) said that the reader can understand the writer's feelings in learning the words implied in poetry.

Understanding figurative language. Another finding is related to the use of figurative language. The students can learn figurative language by learning poetry. Ahmad (2014) who argued that poetry can make students have strong feelings towards the choice of words, formulations and the beauty of language so that it can help students understand beautiful similes, metaphors, and emotion of poetry.

The Challenges of Using Poetry in Literary Appreciation Class

Unfamiliar vocabulary. The first challenge faced by students on using poetry is lack of vocabulary. The participants believed that one of the challenges of using poetry is lack of vocabulary possessed by students. The participants' statement is similar to Wulandari (2016) who said that lack of vocabulary might be challenges because the students find difficult in understanding words.

Complicated word is also the challenges faced by students related to vocabulary. Based on the interview, the participants believed that poetry contains complicated word that make student not understand the meaning of the poetry. Poetry usually uses figurative language that is not used in everyday life so this can be a problem that is often faced by student.

There is also another challenge related to vocabulary which is choosing the appropriate words. Based on the interview, the participants argued that choosing appropriate word was the challenge faced by students in using poetry.

Unfamiliar pronunciation. The second finding on the challenge faced by students is related to pronunciation. Based on the interview, the participant believed that pronunciation is one of challenges faced by students in using poetry. By learning poetry the students might experience difficulty in pronunciation because they find unfamiliar words (Ahmad, 2014).

Understanding the tone of poetry. The third challenge on using poetry is how to feel the poetry. Two participants believed that feeling the poetry can be one of challenges on using poetry in class. Chamcharatsri (2013) stated that Second language learners may feel frustrated, confused, and lost when they try to understand the writer's feeling in other languages.

Students' Strategies to Overcome the Problem

Imitating. The first strategy is imitating. Based on the interview, the participants believed that imitating is the best strategy to overcome the problem. The strategy of choosing the appropriate word is imitating from Youtube or

internet. It means that the students can learn poetry from Youtube and internet. The students use this strategy to know how to choose the appropriate words when they write the poetry. Another participants use this strategy to understanding the tone of poetry. These support the argument Wulandari (2016) who said that the students can also follow the language from other media such as music, movie and Youtube.

Using dictionary. The second strategy is using dictionary. The interview shows that one participant believed that using dictionary is one of strategies that can be used by the students. Using the dictionary in poetry class can help the students find the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary.

Asking others. The third strategy is asking the teacher. Based on the interview, the participants stated that asking the teacher is the strategy that was commonly used by students. The participant thinks that poetry has a complicated language. This is in line with Wulandari (2016) who stated that if the students do not understand the language they can ask the language teacher to help them to understand the language.

Another strategy related to asking others is asking some friends. Two participants believed that ask friend can be the strategy to learn poetry. The participant uses this strategy when she/he is confused in choosing the right words to create poetry.

Translating. The last strategy is translating. Based on the interview, one participant stated that she/he translated the poetry as a strategy of her/his problem.

One participant uses this strategy when she/he does not understand the meaning of poetry.

Conclusion

The research discusses the use of poetry in literary class. Poetry is one of the teaching media that is often used in class. By using poetry as teaching media in language learning, the students can get many benefits to improve their ability. After conducting the research, the researcher found seven findings about the benefits of using poetry. Then, the researcher also found three findings about the challenges of using poetry and four findings about students' strategy to overcome the problem. There were seven findings about the benefits of using poetry, they are increasing vocabulary, improving pronunciation, understanding type of poetry, improving writing skill, knowing the right intonation, having the writer's feeling, and understanding figurative language. Then, there were three findings about the challenges of using poetry, namely lack of vocabulary, unfamiliar pronunciation, and feeling the poetry content. And then, there were four findings about students' strategy to overcome their problem, namely imitating, using dictionary, asking others, and the last translating.

Recommendation

Based on the finding found in this study, there are several suggestions regarding to drama implementation in English classroom. These suggestions are for students, lecturers, next researcher, and for the institution. **Teachers.** Based on the research, the teachers can use poetry as their material so that the students get

many benefits to increase their ability. Teacher can confidently continue using poetry in their language class. Moreover, the teacher should select the suitable poetry that can support students' language learning. **Students.** The student are suggested be motivated during the use of poetry in the class because they will get a lot of benefits. They can do similar strategies to overcome their problem. **Next researcher.** Since the researcher only focuses on students' perception, the next researchers can conduct research the similar topic but focuses on teachers' perception. Others researchers are also recommended to carry out the similar topic using quantitative method, so the findings can be generalized. **Institution.** Based on the research, there are many benefits of using poetry in the class. So, the institution is recommended to include poetry as the teaching material in curriculum.

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