

IMPROVING STUDENTS' ANALYTICAL ESSAY WRITING BASED ON POETRY THROUGH LITERARY RESPONSE APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Based on the researcher's experience and observation, the students analytical essay writing skill at the second year of English education department, class E of UIN Suska Riau still indicated low. It was assumed that this condition was caused by inappropriate teaching process done by the lecturer. The purposes of the research were to explain whether literary response approach could better improve students' analytical essay writing skill at the second year of English education department, class e of UIN Suska Riau. The researcher was helped by the collaborator who used the observation checklists, field notes, and the interviews as the research instruments. Besides, she also used analytical essay writing tests to see the students' improvement of analytical essay writing on each cycle. The research started on October, 29th, 2008 and ended on 14th of January-2009. The percentage of the average improvement on cycle I for all analytical essay writing components was 54, 25 %. There was the improvement, if it was compared to the previous result at the last semester. It was only 32,35 %. At the second cycle, it improved to 61,44 %, and at the end of cycle III improved to 78,43 %. The factors of literary response approach that influenced students' analytical essay writing are: (1) the enjoyment of reading the poem enthusiastically; (2) the poem's choice of words has made it easy to understand the meaning; (3) the good atmosphere of teaching and learning process; (4) the interaction among them to motivate to write good essay. Based on the finding, it was concluded that literary response approach can improve students' analytical essay writing at the second year of English education Department, class E of UIN Suska Riau, therefore, the researcher should continue using these approach in teaching English literature.

Keywords: Poetry, Analytical Essay Writing, Literary Response Approach

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Problems

Reading, understanding and writing about poetry are systematically processes when someone wants to enjoy the pleasures of poetry. Reading poem is the first step which involves enjoying the sounds, feeling and thought. Reading poetry also increases our ability in using and understanding language since poems are made of words. After reading the poem, someone tries to understand what the poet means by using his/her interpretation quality. We involve our knowledge about the elements of poetry such as diction, tone, voice, figures of speech to understand the meaning of a poem deeply. Our interpretation toward poetry can help us to enjoy the pleasure of poetry artistically. As the intellectual person, we try to continue our pleasure of poetry by writing the perception or appreciation based on our understanding that described on the poem we read. A number of things happen when we write about poetry. First, in writing about poem we tend to read it more attentively, noticing things you might overlook in more casual reading. Second, since writing stimulates thinking, when we write about poetry we find ourselves thinking more about what a particular work means and why we respond to it as we do. And third, we begin to acquire power over the works we write about, making them more meaningful to us. Therefore, writing about poetry can encourage us to read it attentively and enable us to discover what we think about the poem. Also, writing about poetry also gives us opportunities to state our point of views about ideas and values expressed in a poem.

In learning poetry, there are some approaches to help someone to enjoy to

read, to understand, and to write its analysis. One of the approaches that is often used by the lecturers in university level is the poetry learning approach or poetry appreciation written by Alexander (1979). This approach focuses on reading, understanding, and writing a poem through poetry devices. It explores the poem's meaning and its analysis through structural, sense, and sound appreciation. However, this approach hasn't been effective in learning poetry at English education students in UIN Suska Riau. It indicates that the students don't enjoy learning the poetry.

Furthermore, there are some problems have been faced by the English education student of UIN SUSKA Riau in reading, understanding and writing about poetry. In reading poem, there are 7 students that are not able to read a poem, it means that 20,59% of students are not able to read poetry emotionally and impressionistically, it happens to some students who have little self confidence to read a poem in front of the class or loudly. It also happens because they are weak in pronouncing some English poetic words.

Next, the students also have difficulties in understanding the poem. 29,41% or 10 students cannot interpret the poem accurately. They are only able to understand the poem generally. They have difficulties to use certain elements of poetry to appreciate their poetry understanding. They face the difficulties to understand some poetic words. They don't understand the author's message on the poem.

Moreover, there are 67,65% of students are not able to write analytical essay on poetry. It means that 23 students feel difficult to focus on the

certain aspects or issue to write analytical essay. They are difficult to state the evidence or facts on their essay writing and also they have difficulty to conclude all information based on their previous ideas. They have little background knowledge toward the poem they read and the author's life. They write their analysis with little comment on the poem. They are not accustomed to exploring the author's idea or message.

Based on the problems above, the lecturer should have the good literary knowledge so that they can teach their students how to appreciate the poem effectively. The lecturer has to change the approach and the strategy in order to get improvement in teaching poetry. On the other hand, as the English learners, they are expected to be able to understand what the poet means by the poem and then they have to try to use their interpretation to understand the poem. Finally they should be able to write an essay analytically based on their point of view.

Since poetry is the important part of learning English literature, students must have good ability in reading, understanding and writing of analytical essay on poetry itself. To achieve the good ability on those three processes of poetry, students should master the elements of poetry itself and also know about the history of the author's life background.

Based on the researcher's experience and observation, a lot of students have had low knowledge in writing analytical essay on poetry. These problems make some students not be able to express their ideas after learning poems. Therefore, the lecturer will try the new approach to teach English poetry. The approach is

expected to be able to help the students in reading, understanding and writing about poetry analytically. It is called literary response approach (Diyanni, 2002: xxvii). Literary Response Approach is the kind of literary analysis approach that divides the analysis into three processes of learning poetry; Experience, interpretation and evaluation toward literary works. This approach can be used in reading, understanding and writing analytical essay on poetry. This approach emphasizes reading as an active enterprise involving thought and feeling. It encourages students to value their emotional reactions and their previous experience with life and with language. Also, students are invited to consider why they respond as they do and how their responses change during subsequent reading of a work. They are encouraged to see literature as a significant reflection of life and an imaginative extension of its possibilities.

By applying literary response approach, it is expected that the students will improve learning poetry. They will be able to read a poem effectively, also they will be able to understand the meaning of the poem and then they enjoy writing their point of view toward the poem intellectually.

Therefore, this research will focus on the application of Literary Response Approach in English literature classroom. This approach will be guidance to teach and to learn poetry effectively and could help the students enjoy in learning poetry and also could improve students' ability in learning poetry. The researcher assumes that by using Literary Response Approach will help the students enjoy in reading, understanding and writing about poetry.

THEORIES

1. Writing of Analytical Essay

An analytical essay is one of literary writings that focus on the analysis toward certain aspect or issue. It means that someone writes the analysis based on his/her responses and thoughts about the matter taught to him/her.

Based on the information from <http://home.earthlink.net/~tewriters/essayhtml>, accessed on June 26-2008 mentions 'the analytical essay writing begins with a whole object, such as a poem, novel, short story or play'. The writer of analytical essay tries to take things apart to examine the individual pieces that make up the whole.

An analytical essay will attempt to explain the significance of a portion of a literary work, by proving some sort of point. The point someone tries to make may have to do with characterization, plot, theme, style or other literary concerns. Before writing analytical essay, the writers must focus on what they wish to convey to the reader about the literary work. Once the writers have a focus, they must attempt to make some kind of points about the literary work in their essay. The point they are trying to make is often the answer to a question (or prompt) which a teacher/lecturer has given them.

The answer to the prompt, or the point that is made, should be the main idea of the essay. This is called a **Thesis Statement**. A thesis statement is someone's opinion. The thesis statement is what it will spend to the rest of the essay. As the writer of an analytical essay is to convince the reader that the opinion is correct;

the thesis statement must be proven truly based on the evidence from the text. It must be clearly stated in the **introductory paragraph**. The thesis statement is the sentence that ends of introduction.

In the paragraphs which follow the introduction, called the **body** of the paper. This part must provide evidence (examples) to prove the point. The sentences must be very specific about how the evidence can support the opinion. The writer should quote passages from the text to prove the opinion and explain how they relate to the main point in the previous thesis.

Finally, the writer must write a **conclusion** (a final paragraph), which ties everything together. The conclusion is essentially a mirror of the introduction. Just as an introduction leads the reader in to the thesis, the conclusion leads out from it. Often, the arguments presented in the body are summarized and the thesis is restated as the proof of the essay.

2. The Nature of Poetry

Some literary experts in Hudson (2005:82-84) have defined about poetry in different point of views. Johnson says that poetry is "metrical composition"; it is "the art of uniting pleasure with truth by calling imagination to the help of reason; and its essence is invention". Mill says that poetry is "the thought and words in which emotion spontaneously embodies it". Then, Macaulay says that poetry is "we mean the art of employing words in such a manner to produce an illusion on the imagination, the art of doing

by means of words what the painter does by means of color”.

Carlyle declares that poetry is “we will call *musical thought*”. Shelley says poetry is “the expression of the imagination”. Also, Hazlet defines poetry is “the language of the imagination and the passions”. Leigh hunt says “the utterance of a passion for truth, beauty, and power, embodying and illustrating its conceptions by imagination and fancy, and modulating its language on the principle of variety in unity”. In Coleridge’s view, poetry is “the antithesis of science, having for its immediate object pleasure, not truth”. Wordsworth declares poetry is “the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge and the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science”.

According to Poe, poetry is “the rhythmic creation of beauty”. According to Keble, poetry is “a vent for over charged feeling or a full imagination”. Doyle says poetry is “our dissatisfaction with what is present and close at hand”. Ruskin

defines poetry is “the suggestion, by the imagination, of noble grounds for the noble emotions”.

Moreover, Prof. Courthope says poetry is “the art of producing pleasure by the just expression of imaginative thought and feeling in metrical language”. Mr. Watts-Dunton says poetry is “the concrete and artistic expression of the human mind in emotional and rhythmical language”. Then, Frost in Kennedy (1976:453) says poetry is “a rhythmical composition of words expressing an attitude, designed to surprise and delight and to arouse an emotional response”.

3. Literary Response Approach

Literary response approach was designed to involve students in the twin acts of reading and analysis. Each of the genres fiction, poetry, and drama is introduced by a three-part explanatory overview or reading process. DiYanni identifies **three processes** of learning poetry; **the experience of poetry, the interpretation of poetry, and the evaluation of poetry.**

METHOD

The kind of this research is classroom action research. It focuses on “*taking action and effecting positive educational change* based on the findings rather than being satisfied with reporting teachers’ conclusions to others” (Mills:2000:4). It can be concluded that classroom action research tries to make solution in the classroom toward the problems that have been faced by the teachers at their subject area.

The setting of this research is at the English education department of

UIN SUSKA Riau. There are 34 students as the participants of this research. They were from class E of third semester.

There were some instruments that the researcher used on this research, such as: test, observation, field notes, interview.

The researcher used the cycles that were developed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) in doing the research. There were four steps of cyclical process that was, plan, action,

observation, and reflection. The four steps could be described as follows:

a. Plan

The research and her collaborator made the lesson plan to start the cycle.

b. Action

The researcher implemented the lesson plan to do the action in her classroom.

c. Observation

While doing the action, the collaborator observed the teaching and learning process by using the instruments (observation checklist and field notes).

d. Reflection

The researcher and her collaborator evaluated the learning process results to revise the plan for the next action.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Result

The research consisted of three cycles. Each cycle was done in some meetings. On the first cycle, the researcher focused on students' writing in 'intrinsic value'. The second cycle, students focused on the 'extrinsic value' for their writing. Whereas, the third cycle, the students were given the chance to choose their essay writing based on the both values.

On cycle 1, the researcher asked the students to write their analytical essay based on the given poem. They had to write until three times to make their essay writing to be better. The writing results could be seen from the percentage of each meeting. On the first meeting, most of the students got low score in main body and conclusion component. They only got the good score for introduction component. However, most of students were still low in writing analytical essay.

On cycle II, the students also did the same tasks like cycle I. The students wrote their essay writing in extrinsic value. The students' essay writing percentage indicated that 50% of students could write for the three

components. It means that there is the improvement for the cycle II.

On cycle III, the students' analytical essay writing ability indicated more improvements. It could be proved by its percentage result. The students began to be accustomed to writing their essay and they seemed to be enjoyable to write it. More than 50% of students were able to write their analytical essay for 'introduction', 'main body', and 'conclusion'.

2. Discussion

There were the improvements toward students' analytical essay writing ability based on poetry for each cycle. Each cycle indicated that the students were able to write an analytical essay for three components. They had the ability to state their ideas on introduction based on its chosen title, they were also able to develop their thesis statement on main body and finally, they concluded their ideas by giving the summary of the main point for the conclusion.

There were some factors that influenced the students improvement of analytical essay writing on each cycle. At cycle I, gradually, the students could

develop their ideas on main body and conclusion. It caused by their enjoyment of reading the poem and some familiar words inside the poem. Also, the lecturer always helped and motivated them by giving clearer instructions toward each step of writing. At cycle II and III, there were more improvements from the previous cycle. The students

enjoyed writing the analytical essay because they only reviewed its writing process and made few revisings on certain parts. So, the most important factor that influenced their analytical essay writing was the gradually processes of writing activity by using literary response approach.

CONCLUSION

After conducting the classroom action research in teaching analytical essay writing based on poetry by applying literary response approach for three cycles, it can be concluded that: (1). Literary response approach can help the students to improve their analytical essay writing based on poetry, (2), their

enjoyment of reading the poem before they understand and write their analysis, (3), the atmosphere of teaching and learning process by using literary response approach has influenced the students' creativeness in writing analytical essay.

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