A STUDY ON THE ABILITY OF THE FOURTH SEMESTER STUDENTS OF ENGLISH STUDY PROGRAM IN UNDERSTANDING ENGLISH POETRY

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Abstract: *This research aims to find out the ability of the fourth semester students of English Study Program FKIP UR in understanding English poetry. The number of sample was 40 students of the fourth semester students of English study program FKIP UR which was decided by using the Cluster Random Sampling technique. The data were collected by administering written test where the students are obliged to write general and detailed meaning based on the given poetry. The students' scores were scored by three raters and were classified into five levels of ability, which are very poor, poor, mediocre, good and excellent. Based on research findings, it was found out that the ability of fourth semester students was at mediocre level with average score of 60. Besides, it was also found that the students' ability in the content aspect was higher than the language-structures aspect where the average score of contents is 3,03 while the average score of language-structures is 2,93. This research implies that the fourth semesters of English study program were able to understand English Poetry.*

Key Words: *Study, Ability, Understanding, Poetry Mastery*

PENELITIAN TERHADAP KEMAMPUAN MAHASISWA SEMESTER EMPAT FKIP BAHASA INGGRIS UR DALAM MEMAHAMI PUISI

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui level kemampuan mahasiswa semester empat Prodi Bahasa Inggris FKIP UR dalam memahami puisi. Sampel penilitian ini adalah 40 mahasiswa semester empat Prodi Bahasa Inggris FKIP UR yang ditentukan dengan menggunakan teknik *Cluster Random Sampling*. Data dikumpulkan dengan memberikan tes tertulis dimana mahasiswa diharuskan menulis general meaning dan detailed meaning berdasarkan puisi yang disediakan. Skor para mahasiswa dinilai oleh tiga orang penilai dan dikategorikan dalam 5 level yakni sangat kurang, kurang, cukup, baik dan sangat baik. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, diketahui bahwa kemampuan mahasiswa semester empat Prodi Bahasa Inggris FKIP UR berada pada level cukup dengan skor rata-rata 60. Selain itu, diketahui juga bahwa kemampuan mahasiswa pada aspek *content* lebih tinggi dari aspek *language-structures*, dimana dengan nilai rata-rata aspek *content* 3,03, sedangkan aspek *language-structures* 2,93. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa mahasiswa semester empat Prodi Bahasa Inggris FKIP UR mampu memahami puisi bahasa Inggris

Kata Kunci: Penilitian, Kemampuan, Pemahaman, Penguasaan Puisi

INTRODUCTION

The presence of poetry in language teaching can be perceived as a determination to educate the students intellectually as well as to humanize learning activity. Embodied from human perspective and visualization of senses, poetry reflected every phase of human life. Therefore, understanding poetry not only enriches their knowledge but also matures them. Collie and Slater (1987) claim that the necessity of literature in the language learning lies through its credibility as valuable material, its contribution to cultural enrichment and language enrichment, and its ability to build personal involvement. Besides, Maley (in Hişmanoğlu, 2005) lists some reasons related to the urgency of literature inclusion in language teaching which are Universality, Non-triviality, Personal Relevance, Variety, Interest, Economy-suggestive power and Ambiguity.

Like many scriptures, it is important for the reader to understand poetry either textually or contextually. Bereiter (2006) defines understanding as a psychological process related to an abstract or physical object, such as a person, situation, or message whereby one able to think about it and use concepts to deal adequately with that object. Besides, David Perkins (1994) calls understanding as "performance perspective". He states that understanding is a matter of being able to do a variety of thought-demanding things with a topic—like explaining, finding evidence and examples, generalizing, applying, analogizing, and representing the topic in a new way (in Bereiter, 2006). Wiggins and McTighe (1999) consider that the students can be considered truly understands if they can Explain, Interpret, Apply, Demonstrate perspective, Display empathy and Have self-knowledge. In understanding poetry, it important for the reader to understand its meaning. Alexander (1963) classify the meaning of the poem into three types, which are General meaning, Detailed meaning and Intention. The general meaning is the meaning that can be acquired by the readers after reading the poem as a whole. The detailed meaning is the accurate meaning which is expressed in simplicity. This meaning only can be understood by the reader if they read stanza by stanza, pay attention to the diction and understand how the poem begins, the developed theme and how it concluded. Meanwhile, Intention concern with the feeling that the poet is trying to arouse or the aims of his or her poem made (Alexander, 1963).

According to Buku Pedoman FKIP 2015/2016, poetry courses is designed to help the students enjoy poetry and to be mature and wise with realizing the moral value and truth of life in literature works. Besides, the Lecturing Agreement describes poetry courses as the courses that offer the opportunity to read poetry as comprehension process, identifying poetic devices and conveying the content of poetry in language learning either spoken or written. In specific, the students are demanded to be competent in understanding the content of poetry as the literary text and their context, able to explore for its meaning, and capable in both expressing and communicating their comprehension into its general meaning, detailed meaning and intention of the writer. Therefore, this research was to find out the ability level of 4th semester students of English Study Program in understanding meaning (General meaning and Detailed meaning) of English poetry

METHODOLOGY

This research was categorized into descriptive quantitative research. Gay et al. (2012) defines Quantitative research is the collection and analysis of numerical data to describe, explain, predict or examine phenomena of interest. This research aimed to find out the ability of 4th semester students of the English Learning Study Program in understanding the meaning of English poetry. The sample of research was the 4th semester students of English department. The 4th semester students of English department were divided into 4A, 4B, and 4C with the total number of population was 120 students. However, since the population quite big, the researcher sampled the population by using the cluster random sampling technique. As the result, 4A class was selected to be the sample in this research.

The instrument in collecting data in this research was writing test. The test was scored by three raters. The students were asked to write down the General Meaning and Detailed Meaning of the poem that they read. The duration time for doing the test was 90 minutes. It was also important to note that the detailed meaning considered as main aspect that assessed in this research. The reason for choosing writing test as the instrument because it was aimed to make their thought visible like Vygotsky (in marxists.org.) states, the relation between thought and word is a living process; thought is born through words.

Then, to analyze the data, the writer uses the following formula:

1. To calculate the scores of each student by using the following formula:

$$Total\ Score = content\ point + language\text{-}structure\ point$$

2. To know the real score from each rater, the following formula are used

$$RS = \frac{TS}{10} X100$$

Where:
   RS= Real Score
   TS= Total Score
   MS= Maximum Score

3. After calculating all of real score, to find out the final score of students, the writer summarizes the score from each rater by the following formula

$$TRS = \frac{Rater\ 1 + Rater\ 2 + Rater\ 3}{3}$$

TRS = Total real score of the students test

4. To find out the students' means score, the writer applied the following formula:

$$X^- = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

Where,

  X^- = The average score of the test
  $\sum X$ = The sum of all score
  N = The total number of students

<div align="right">Gay (2000)</div>

Lastly, the researcher used classification of students' score by Harris (1974). The level of the students' score in listening is classified into five levels of mastery. The classification could be seen in this following table:

Table 1. The Classification of Score

Test score	Level of Ability
81 – 100	Excellent
61 – 80	Good
41 – 60	Mediocre
21– 40	Poor
0 – 20	Very poor

<div align="right">Harris (1974)</div>

RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this study, the writer presented the test result of the ability of the fourth semester students' of English Study Program in understanding English poetry. There were 40 students who took the test. The students' writing was scored by adapting Official Languages: Home Language (2015) to find out the students' abilities in all writing aspects. The students' scores started from 1 to 5 for each aspect of writing. The score of 1 was the lowest and score of 5 was the highest one. The writing aspects that were evaluated in this study are Content and Language-Structures.

1. The Description of the Students' Scores in Understanding English Poetry

Table 2. The Percentage of the Students' Ability Level

No.	Classsification		Frequency	Percentage
	Test Score	Level of Ability		
1	81-100	Excellent	1	2%
2	61-80	Good	15	38%
3	41-60	Mediocre	23	58%
4	21-40	Poor	0	0%
5	0-20	Very Poor	1	2%
Total			**40**	**100%**

Table 2 shows the percentages of students' ability level. The result showed that the students' ability was classified into mediocre level of ability. It can be seen that more than half of the total students were in average level. From 40 students, a student (3%) was in excellent level, 15 students (38%) who were in good level, 23 students (58%) were categorized mediocre level and a student (2%) was in very poor level. As matter fact, the very poor level of ability student caused by her absence during the test.

2. The Presentation of the Students' Ability for Each Aspect of Writing

After obtaining the students' ability in writing descriptive texts, it was important to know their ability in each aspects of writing. The writer presented the classification of the students' ability for each aspect of writing as follows:

Table 3. The Percentage of the Students' Ability Level in Each Aspect of Writing

Classsification		Aspects of Writing			
Test Score	Level of Ability	Content		Language-Structures	
		F	P	F	P
81-100	Excellent	1	2%	0	0
61-79	Good	11	28%	9	23%
41-60	Mediocre	27	68%	30	75%
21-40	Poor	0	0	0	0
0-20	Very Poor	1	2%	1	2%
Total		40	100%	60	100%

Table 3 shows the research findings which classified into levels ability, percentages-frequency and aspect of writing. The result showed that the students' ability was classified into mediocre level of ability. In term of content, a student (3%) was in excellent level, 11 students (28%) who were in good level, 27 students (68%) were categorized mediocre level and a student (2%) was in very poor level. Meanwhile, in language-structures aspect, a student (2%) was in very poor level, 9 students (23%) who were in good level, and the rest students (75%) were categorized mediocre level.

Table 4. The Students' Ability for Each Aspect of Writing According to the Three Raters

No.	Aspects of Writing	Average Score	Real Score	Level of Ability
1	Content	3,03	60	Mediocre
2	Language-Structure	2,93	60	Mediocre
	Average	2,98	60	Mediocre

Table 4 shows that the students' real score in terms of each assessed aspects were in mediocre level or in the range of 41-60. The students' scores in every aspect of writing were slightly different. It shows that content aspect was higher than the aspect of Language-Structure with the average score of 3,03.

Discussion

After knowing the students ability in understanding poetry in general, it was important to know the detail of students' ability in terms of each aspects of writing. The researcher presented the students writing ability level for each aspect of writing as follows:

1. The Students' Ability in Terms of Content

In terms of content, it was found that students' scores for each aspect of scoring tended to be higher in content than in language structure. In this aspect, a student (3%) was at in excellent level, 11 students (28%) were in good level, 27 students (68%) were categorized mediocre level and a student (2%) was in very poor level. It means that the students are able to understand the main point of the poem and apprehend its content. It also indicated that students applied appropriate interpretative strategies in understanding the poem. These findings is supported by the fact that the student had learned about these devices during poetry course that they took in that semester. As stated by Alexander (1963), the acknowledgment of poetic device is essential in comprehending the meaning of poetry. He also suggests that the title of poem help in catching theme as well as meaning in general.

However, few students were puzzled with the meaning of poetry. They tended to put personal perception related to the meaning. According to Purves & Beach (1972), these problems commonly related with three main factors that are insufficient information, failure to understand (cognitive failure) and Psychological problems. In line with this, some literature teaching expert express that the mistaken understanding often lead by several factors such as oversentimentality and response or making out plain sense (oversimplification) by I.A Richard (1929), the failure to grasp detailed statement by Davis (1944) and the egocentric perception by Ring (1968). Squire (1964) also states that happiness binding which is related to the desire for happy endings affects students' comprehension in understanding the meaning (In Purves & Beach, 1972). In case of this research, Psychological problems is considered as dominant factor that affects students' ability in understanding English poetry

2. The Students' Ability in Terms of Language-Structures

In terms of language-structures, it was found that students' scores for each aspect of scoring tended to be lower than its counterpart. In this aspect, a student (2%) was in very poor level, 9 students (23%) were in good level, and the rest students (75%) were categorized mediocre level. From the percentage, it implies that the students' ability in terms of Language-Structures was in mediocre level of ability and this aspect is slightly

difficult for the students. Therefore, although the students were able to catch the idea of poem generally. However, there few of them still troubled with grammatical control.

The errors consist of grammatical control and choice of word. However, the error mainly related with grammatical control than the choice of words. Regarded with grammatical control, the errors commonly related to modal verbs, faulty subject-verb agreement, misplaced words or phrases, misspelled words, conjunction, passive voice, plurality, transition signal, incoherence and parallelism. Besides, there also some error related to punctuation and the addition of unnecessary words that caused by the inattention of the students.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, the writer concluded that the fourth semester students of English Study Program in understanding English poetry were in mediocre level with the mean score was 60. Besides, it also notices that the students score in term of content tend to be higher than in language-structures. Specifically, the average score of content aspect is 3,03 while, the average score of language-structures aspect is 2,93. In addition, more students were categorized as good level of ability in the content aspects than the language-structures aspect. 11 students categorized as good level of ability in terms of content while there are 9 students only in terms of language-structures.

In brief, it could be inferred that the students are able to apprehend the idea of poetry as well as understand its meaning. However, the students still troubled with language-structures due to their inattention in several aspects of grammatical control such as faulty subject-verb agreement, conjunction, incoherence and parallelism.

Recommendation

Based on the conclusion above, the researcher would like to propose some recommendations related to this study.
1. It recommended for the students to put more attention to every component of poetry in which improves their ability in understanding poetry wholly.
2. Since few students were troubled with language-structures, the students are urge to master the grammar aspect by practice themselves diligently,
3. The students have to read more, especially in kind of literature reading,

Finally, those were the three recommendations that the researcher considered as necessary recommendation in understanding poetry. By doing this research, the researcher hopes that this study could give some valuable contributions to the teachers and students of the English Study Program, readers and the researcher as well.

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