

HOW DO I WRITE POETRY? Investigating Students' Creativity in Writing Poetry

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ABSTRACT

Puisi adalah salah satu karya sastra. Dalam konteks EFL, puisi diyakini dapat meningkatkan kreativitas siswa, berfiki kritis dan keterampilan bahasa, terutama membaca dan menulis. Kelas menulis kreatif disediakan sebagai tempat siswa belajar tentang puisi. Salah satu kegiatannya adalah proyek menulis puisi. Berdasarkan hasil, ada prestasi yang baik yang diperoleh siswa. Mereka menulis puisi secara kreatif dalam berbagai tema. Selain itu, umpan balik positif juga diberikan oleh siswa tentang bagaimana mereka akhirnya suka membaca. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki kreativitas siswa dalam menulis puisi dan tantangan yang dihadapi selama proses penulisan. Metode yang dilakukan dalam penelitian ini berupa studi kasus. Lima dari tiga puluh siswa yang memperoleh nilai terbaik menjadi partisipan. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan dokumentasi dan juga interview yang dilakukan dua kali. Adapun teknik analisi yang digunakan adalah dokumentasi dan analisis tematik. Hasil dari penelitian ini terungkap bahwa kreatifitas siswa sangat bervariasi dilihat dari dua aspek,; yakni pemilihan isi, struktur, language play, serta konektifitas antara gambar dan puisi yang dihasilkan. Selain itu, ada 2 tantangan yang dihadapi siswa dalam proses penulisan puisi; yaitu hambatan kosa kata dan juga ide dan konsep yang terbatas.

Kata kunci: *Puisi, Kreativitas, Menulis Kreatif*

I. INTRODUCTION

When it comes to say that language is an art, poetry is one of the proofs. Poetry is an art in which language is presented in its most condensed form and a cultural composite (Muiruri: 2016). Further, Hanauer in Widodo (2016) argues that poetry as a form of creative writing that communicates thoughts, perceptions, emotion/affection, and experiences. One can express everything by words; one of them is in form of poetry.

In English as foreign language context, poetry can be one of the ways to learn language. It helps in vocabulary building; enhances listening, reading, writing, grammar, builds cooperation, imparts values, builds self-esteem and allows the learner to have fun (Elena:2013)

Yehin Widodo (2015) shows an empirical study on how poetry goes very well in developing EFL learners' skills. It is said that poetry writing could enhance students' imaginative thinking, critical thinking, and language skills (e.g. reading, listening, writing, and speaking)

In spite of its advantages in language learning, EFL in our curriculum give less attention on using poetry as way to achieve language skills. It is commonly focused more on semantic field than semiotic. (Widodo: 2016) Therefore, EFL learners have a little chance in expressing their emotion, perception, ideas, and personal experience contextually.

As one of the elective subject, creative writing class gives so much chance for the students to express their thought, feeling,

emotion through writing. One of the materials studied in this subject is reading and writing poetry. The two weeks poetry project held the students into reading poetry, analyzing the poetry and finally writing poetry. Various themes were found beginning from love, hate, friendship, family, distressed, etc. They also presented their poetry in two different ways; digital and paper-based. In addition, based on there are flections on students' portfolio, most of gave the positive feedback by reflected on how they can express their feeling through poetry, having fun in writing poetry, and how they finally love to write poetry.

Based on that achievements found in creative writing class, it is interesting to know how the creative process of students getting the idea, creating the concept and how they finally wrote their poetry. Therefore, this study focuses on investigating two question addressed. Firstly, it addressed on how the students' creativity in writing poetry. Secondly, the process of the project of writing poetry, including the obstacles they got during their poetry writing.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Poetry in ELT

It is hard to find the definition of poetry. Every poet and person can have their own personal definition of poetry. Basically, the words of poetry derived from the Greek word, *Poiein* means to make or to construct. According to S.T Coleridge, a well-known writer, poetry is the product of the poet's imagination and the best words in the best order. Grainger et al (2005) define poetry as multimodal form of communication. In addition Muiruri (2016) argues that poetry is an art in which language is presented in its most condensed form and a cultural composite.

In teaching learning process, poetry can be

one of the media to learn language. Somers in Curwood (2011) sees that teachers use poetry to challenge their students to think, to read with patience and insight, to see connections and relationships, and to write with imagination, precision, and depth. Despite for learning language, poetry is regarded as a tool to arise students' creative thinking, imagination, and accuracy in depth. In addition, Widodo (2015) said that poetry writing could enhance students' imaginative thinking, critical thinking, and language skills (e.g. reading, listening, writing, and speaking).

In conclusion, poetry as one of literary works inform of condensed words about one's person although, ideas, perception or imagination on something can be media to teach language. The advantages of using poetry in teaching learning language as it mentioned previously are to build their creativity, critical thinking and imagination as a part of importance elements of learning goals.

2.2. Views about Creativity in ELT

The importance of creativity as a part of language learning components has been considered through years. In relation to language learning, Curwood et al (2005) argue that "a better balance needs to be struck between teaching the important skills of form, grammar and spelling for example, and providing opportunities for children to undertake purposeful writing which satisfies their need to communicate and harnesses their individuality and creativity. In other words, the teaching and learning is not merely learning the skills of language, but the needs of individuality and creativity to use their target language.

Creativity from the linguistic perspective is

connected with language play. (Tin et al: 2009). In addition, language play is seen as important element in L2 context as Cook (2000) that language play as ‘natural’ and important in L2 learning, and he defines language play both at a formal and at a semantic level: at the formal level, there is play with sounds, words, and grammatical structures to create patterns. At the semantic level, there is play with units of meaning, connecting them in unusual ways to create imaginary worlds.

While in writing process, Curwood (2005) assumes that the creative process of writing includes four stages; making choice about stance, content, structure, and language, creating connection and combination between ideas and images. It can be said creativity in writing process considered several elements such as the choices of content, structure and language in which students can use language play, and the sense of relation between their ideas of writing with images.

III. RESEARCH PROCEDURE

Case study is used forth is research. Yin (2003) claims that case study investigates a contemporary phenomenon with in its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. Five students of English Department who already took writing class last semester will be the object of the research, consisting of two males and three females. They are known as productive in writing poetry.

The data was collected using document. They consist of students’ writing poetry written while taking creative class, or after taking creative writing class. In addition, interview is

also used to find out the information that is considered less from documentation, and it also will capture the idea of writing poetry done before the final writing stage.

This study used two kinds of data analysis. Firstly, it was used document analysis to analyze students’ creativity in writing poetry. Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents—both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material. (Bowen: 2009) the document used in this study was students’ portfolio of creative writing and children literature class, and also their final project of both lesson. The second one is thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006).

IV. FINDING

This part shows the result of the study after being analyzed. Two questions of the research addressed; (1) How the students’ creativity in writing poetry, (2) what are the challenges faced in doing the creative process of writing poetry. Using thematic analysis, the explanation bellow shows the creativity processes of students in writing poetry and also the challenges faced by them.

1. Students’ Creativity in Writing Poetry

a. The choice of content, structure and language

The table below showed the choice of content, structure and language.

Table 1

Student	The Choice of Content	Structure	Language
S1	20 Poetries of life diary	Paper-based	Using 20 kinds of language play
S2	4 poetries about random themes	Digital and paper based	Using 3 kinds of language play
S3	26 poetries	Paper-	Using 26

	about love and break up	based	kinds of language play
S4	10 poetries about random themes	Digital and paper-based	Using 10 kinds of language play
S5	1 poetry about parents and 20 haikus about life	Paper-based	No language play

The data showed that the participants wrote various contents of their poetry project. Students A chose a life diary as the theme shown by every important dates as the title of every poetry. She used the important date such as February, 1997 as the day she was born, February 2014 as her sweet seventeen, December 2015 as the day of her greatest regret and so on.

#Vignette 1

Judul puisinya saya bikin tanggal biar lebih mudah mengungkapkannya

I made the date as my title poetry to make me feel easier to express

Source: Student 1 (interview 1)

Meanwhile different contents and structure were written by student 2 and 4. They made their project both in paper-based and digital media, also they used the same random themes as their content of poetry.



Figure 1. Student 2 and Student 4 Project

Different from the others, student 5 wrote haiku to as her final project. Haiku is a kind of poetry that consists of 5-7-5 syllables for each line. The reason of writing haiku as her project

is portrayed below

#Vignette 2

Kalau haiku, saya suka aja buatnya, Karena menurut saya haiku paling mudah untuk dibuat jadi saya bias cepet dan cukup banyak buatnya.

For haiku, I like to make it. Because haiku is the easiest, I can write it as much and as fast as I can.

Source: Student 5 (interview 1)

The simplicity of haiku was one of the student’s reason for writing. Haiku also can be one of writing technique motivate the students to write in English. It is also easy to read since there are only 3 lines in a stanza with 5-7-5 syllables.

Students use various creativity related to language. From linguistic point of view, creativity can be seen from student language play (Tin et al: 2009). The pie chart below shows language play the existed in their project.

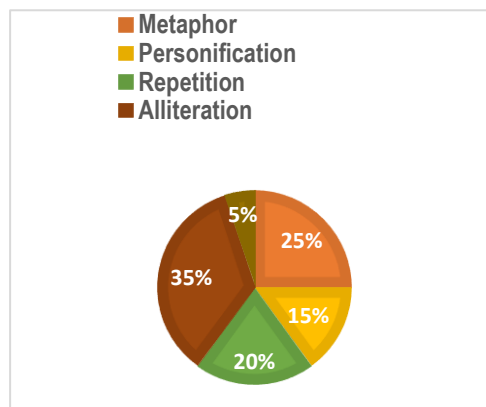


Table 2: Language Play Used by the Students

Alliteration is the most language play used by the students. It is a literary device that repeats a speech sound in a sequence of words that are close to each other. Student 1 uses 4 alliterations for his 35 poetries. One of the examples is;

So I won’t be at your bedside to watch
 you close your eyes and die
 So I won’t be at your bedside to hold your
 hand and say good bye

(Source: Student 1's poetry-Gone)

Meanwhile student 2 used the word insult in various form to create her pattern for her poetry.

Insulted
A person is insulted
They insult
You are the most insulted creatures
Insulting the insulted human

(Source: Student 2's poetry- August, 2014)

Metaphor was in the second place of language play the students used for writing their poetry. It is a figure of speech that describes an object or action in a way that is not literary true, but explain an idea or make a comparison. (Underwood: 2018). Unfortunately, only student 1 using metaphor. He used metaphor for almost of his poetry. In the poetry entitled Hollow he wrote;

A house of cards from a worn out deck
A home from the fellowship, poise and
calm

(Source: student 1's poetry-Hollow)

In another one he wrote;

My love for you was a bulletproof
So I'll try to write it and fill the pen with
blood from the sink

(Source: Student 1's poetry-LS)

The other language play that the students used is personification. It is a giving a human characteristics to non-human things. These figurative speech was found in several poetries of the students.

Loneliness creep my back

(Source: Student 3's poetry-The Light)

Leave the sleep and let the springtime talk
In tongues from the time before man
Listen to a daffodil tell her story

(Source: Student 1's poetry-Springtime)

Images From both of the poetry, it can be seen that the feeling of human are given to the non-human things. Student 3 in his "My Video" poetry gives an action to the loneliness, while

student 1 used daffodil as it can tell the story.

b. The Relation between Images and the Idea of Poetry writing

Images can be a representative of the creativity. The images show the idea of the writing itself. In one of his poetry, student 3 used his video of holding a candle to represent the light and the light means his parents.



Figure 4.2: Student 3's Image

Student 2 used paper painted like old book representing her old memories from birth to today as the title DIARY. She also used craft made from paper flower and dry flower to represent the beauty of her creation

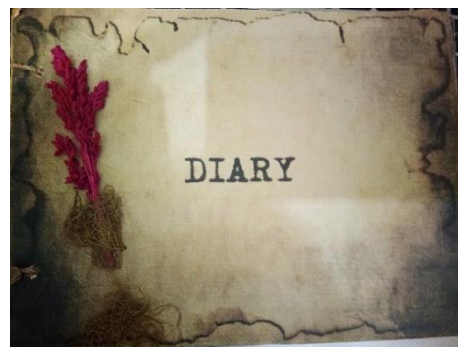


Figure 4.3 Student 2's Poetry Image

While student 1 inserts the image for every poetry. As it can be seen below, the first picture is the image of a warrior as same as the title of his poetry. In the second picture, the poetry entitled Isabelle is represented by the figure of a woman holding reaching a bird.

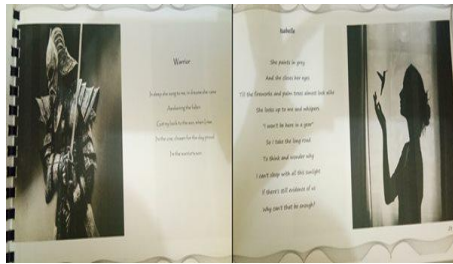


Figure 4.4 Student 1's Poetry Image

2. Students' Challenges in Writing Poetry

Being interviewed, the students are asked the process of how they doing their poetry project. Thematic analysis is used to present the challenges the students faced during the process of writing. There are 2 themes found, among others;

a. Vocabulary Use

The first challenge faced by the students is vocabulary. In this case, because they had to write in their target language, they had to be aware of the context in order to be able to deliver the meaning as they want. These vignettes show students' challenges in writing poetry.

#Vignette 3

Kadang nyari vocabulary yang cocok yang susah, kurang puitis

Sometimes, finding the appropriate vocabulary is difficult, it can be less poetic

Source: Interview of student 2

#Vignette 4

Pemilihan kata yang tepat. Saking bebasnya bebasa jatulis, ternyata ada kata-kata yang kasar, jd disaring lagi

In choosing appropriate words. Sometimes, when it's free, I just write without knowing that there are some rude words. Therefore, I rewrite again

Source: Interview of student 1

#Vignette 5

Kurangnya kosa kata. Jadi sering buka kamus

Lack of vocabularies, so I often open dictionary.

Source: Interview of student 4

Students 2, 1, and 4 stated that vocabulary became the challenges faced by them. Some reasons appear for them, such as finding the appropriate one either for being poetic or being polite. In addition, the lack of vocabularies also challenged student 4 to open dictionary.

b. The Idea and Concept in Pre-writing

In the pre-writing process, students found the approximate challenges; those are about the idea and concept.

#Vignette 6

Kesulitan saya di ide. Kalau mentok, ya. Gimana ya ga dipaksain. Tapi kalau sudah ada ide biasanya langsung ditulis.

My difficulty is in idea. If I don't have any idea, I will not force it. But usually, if I have idea, I will write it directly.

Source: Student 3's Interview

#Vignette 7

Ide untuk menulisnya di awal saja yang agak bingung.

The idea to write in the beginning makes me a little bit confuse

Source: Student 5's Interview

In writing the poetry, students were given the chance to create freely. Some of the students got stuck in the concept and idea because they wanted to write as good as they can.

In the process of pre-writing, most of the participants consider what concept to write until they found out what they wanted to write. Getting confusion on what to write, student 2 thought and got a flashback of what had happened during her lifetime. As she said below.

#Vignette 8

Aduh pusing mau nulis apa, terus keingetan tentang perjalanan diri sendiri aja yang dirasain dari awal sampai sekarang.

It makes me confuse what to write, then I remember about my journey, what I feel from the beginning until now.

Source: Student 2's Interview

V. DISCUSSION

Writing poetry can be one of tools to create creativity as it can be seen from various creativities done by the students. From linguistic perspective, creativity can be done by language play. (Tan et al: 2009) Various creativities were seen from students' use of metaphor, personification, alliteration, etc. It is in line with Cook (2000) seeing language play as 'natural' and important in L2 learning.

In addition, students' creativity on writing poetry is not only merely producing the words but also using other expressive tools such as visual, audiovisual, and craft. Furthermore, writing poetry also students expressed their psychological thought encouraging students the beauty of language. It is in line with Handoyo et al (2016) stated that poetry writing involves different uses of expressive and creative linguistic and other semiotic resources (e.g. visuals, tools). Poetry is not just a literary genre, but also it is a tool for expressing cognitive and psychological states such as thoughts (e.g. freedom) and emotions (e.g. anger). Because of varied cognitive-psychological meanings in poems, poetry writing can create expressive pedagogy that encourages both teachers and learners to consider the beauty of language use in order to communicate different cognitive-psychological meanings and interpretations.

Learning language through poetry also gave a new insight of the core of writing as contextualized learning. As all participants used their personal experience, emotion, and thought in their poetry means that they used language

contextually. Hence, it can be called as meaningful literacy learning. In line with Hanuer (2012) stated that By working with poetry as a form of meaningful literacy, students learn about themselves, about the presence of others, and the diversity of thought and experience that are so much part of this world. Ultimately, learning a language is about widening one's expressive resources and positioning oneself in a multicultural and multilingual world. Poetry writing is a simple way of achieving these aims and personalizing the language classroom.

VI. CONCLUSION

Writing poetry as one of activity in language classroom can build students' creativity both from linguistics perception and the process of writing. The creativity of students could be seen on how they use language play, image, and creative idea in creating the poetry. The process of writing poetry is considered as one of the activity that see language learning as not decontextualized language learning but as contextual language learning involving personal experience, emotion, and thought.

Despite of successful creativity built in writing poetry, some suggestions are regarded as consideration for the next researcher. Using poetry as a final project is considered lack of being wise. Rather than just made poetry as an assignment, it can be more as source of learning. Besides, the scaffolding on pre-writing activity is considered important to bring the idea to the students.

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