

## TEACHING ENGLISH THROUGH POEM

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### ABSTRACT

This is a conceptional article which the writer proposes a concept of teaching English through Poem. The integrated of literature in language teaching is very important. The most widely used language in the world is English, there are many people need to learn English for communication. There are several ways of teaching English, one of them is through literature that is a part of a language, the use of literature in English language teaching can be as authentic material. There are many literary works that can be used for teaching English, one of them is the poem.

Hypothetically, the use of poem in English language teaching can help the teacher improve the students' English language skills and knowledge about the culture of the nation of English. In a class, a teacher should be creative and give the opportunity for students to use English actively and understanding the poem content.

**Keywords: ELT, Literature and Poem**

### ABSTRAK

*Artikel ini adalah konsepsional artikel dimana penulis menyampaikan konsep pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris melalui puisi. Pengintegrasian sastra dalam pembelajaran bahasa asing sangatlah penting, dimana bahasa asing yang paling banyak dipelajari di dunia adalah Bahasa Inggris, banyak orang di dunia mempelajari Bahasa Inggris untuk dapat berkomunikasi dengan berbagai bangsa di dunia. Dalam perkembangannya, banyak cara yang dapat digunakan untuk mengajarkan Bahasa Inggris, salah satunya adalah dengan melalui karya sastra yang merupakan bagian dari Bahasa itu sendiri. Penggunaan karya sastra dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris dapat sebagai otentik material. Banyak sekali karya sastra yang dapat digunakan untuk pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, salah satunya adalah puisi.*

*Secara hipotesis, penggunaan puisi dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris dapat membantu guru dalam meningkatkan kemampuan Bahasa Inggris siswa dan pengetahuan mereka tentang budaya dari negara penutur Bahasa Inggris. Seorang guru harus kreatif dan memberikan kesempatan seluas-luasnya kepada siswa dalam menggunakan Bahasa Inggris secara aktif dan memahami makna dari puisi tersebut.*

**Kata Kunci: ELT, Karya Sastra, Puisi**

## A. INTRODUCTION

Language is a means of communication, the goal of learning a language is the ability to communicate. The ability of individuals to communicate through language is both a unique and universal human quality. The human capacity to think symbolically and to interpret and produce sounds makes it possible to create a language system. Human culture, social behavior, and thinking would not exist without language. On the other hand, communication would be meaningless in the absence of thinking. Language and thinking are so closely connected that it is hard to discuss one without the other, for speech can serve thought and thought can be revealed in speech (Verhoeven, 1998).

The human needs of communication become a primary needs because they have to communicate with others in social life. To communicate with other people who have the same mother tongue with them is possibly easy because they learn the language from their childhood; the problem is when they need to communicate with other people who have a different native language with them.

In this world, the most widely used language to connect people who have different mother tongue is English, English becomes the most powerful language in the world, almost everyone who wants to communicate with others uses English as the language of communication, even almost technology uses English as the default language, such as computer, internet, hand phone and so on.

Based on the explanation above, it is important to learn English not only for England but also other people in the world. There are many ways to learn English that people can try, in education, there are several methods and techniques those are conducted by some linguist and language researcher.

One of the techniques is using literature of the nation of the target language (in this case is English) to teach some skills such as speaking, reading and writing.

## B. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. English Language Teaching

In English language teaching, the teacher must recognize the principle and the method of teaching because a good teacher always wants that his or her class effective. The linguists and researcher have conducted some principle, approach, and method of teaching to help the teacher teaches better.

#### a. Principles

Elizabeth and Rao (2004) mentioned the principle of English language teaching includes:

- a) Principle of definite objectives, the first thing to do is determine the objective of the teaching.
- b) Principle of selecting the material, the material should be appropriate with the objective of the teaching.
- c) Principle of model presentation, the model of presentation should be appropriate with the material and objective of the teaching.
- d) Principle of gradation, the material should be systematically taught.
- e) Principle of activity, in language teaching, the students and teacher should be active.
- f) Principle of correlation, the teaching should be correlated to the real life for giving a better life for students.
- g) Principle of child centeredness, in this era, the students must be able to communicate well, so the students should be given more opportunities to practice their English ability in class.
- h) Principle of cooperation, education is not only teacher's responsibility, the participation of parents, institution and society will be very helpful.
- i) Principle of planning, the teacher should prepare everything he or she needs for effective teaching; this principle should be one of the most important principles
- j) Principle of individual difference, the teacher should consider that every student is different one another, he or she should use an appropriate way for the difference.

A good teacher should consider all of the principle of teaching for the better and effective teaching, and he or she should be creative in solving some problem that maybe arisen in the class.

## **b. Method**

There are several methods of English language teaching (ELT) that can be used by a teacher to teach different skill, knowledge and other aspects of language. Larsen-Freeman (2000) mentioned the methods of teaching language are: Grammar Translation Method (GTM), Direct Method, Audio-Lingual Method (ALM), Silent Way, Desuggestopedia, Community Language Learning (CLL), Total Physical Response (TPR) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).

## **2. Culture and Language Teaching**

Culture is everything about a nation; the habits, ethnic, character, belief, language, literature and so on, like Rosaldo (1984) points out that culture is far more than a mere catalogue of rituals and beliefs. While Hinkel (2007) argued that culture is sometimes identified with notions of personal space, appropriate gestures, time, and so forth. This is why culture and language are inseparable, it is like Samovar et al. (1981) stated that Culture and communication are inseparable because culture not only dictates who talks to whom, about what, and how the communication proceeds, it also helps to determine how people encode messages, the meanings they have for messages, and the conditions and circumstances under which various messages may or may not be sent, noticed, or interpreted. Culture is

the foundation of communication, it is supported by Brown (1994) who mentioned that language is a part of the culture, and culture is a part of the language. So, learning culture while learning language is very important and it cannot be avoided. Politzer (cited in Brooks, 1960 cited on Purba, 2011) stated that:

"As language teachers, we must be interested in the study of culture not because we necessarily want to teach the culture of the other country, but because we have to teach it. If we teach language without teaching at the same time the culture in which it operates, we are teaching meaningless symbols or symbols to which the student attaches the wrong meaning; for unless he is warned, unless he receives cultural instruction, he will associate American concepts or objects with the foreign symbols".

Peck (1998) emphasizes that without the study of culture, foreign language instruction is inaccurate and incomplete. So, the importance of learning culture to learn a language is unavoidable, to do this, we must know the way of using culture in teaching language, especially English, there are many ways to use culture in teaching English, one of them is through literary work.

### **3. Literature in English Language Teaching**

Literature is a part of a culture that exploring the aesthetic of language, why do teacher should use literature in English language teaching? There are several reasons why teacher should use literature in teaching English, the first reason is literature can be regarded as 'authentic material' because it conveys two features in its written text (Cruz, 2010). There are several kinds of literature work those can be used in teaching English such as poetry, song, novel, prose, drama, etc. the second reason is for cultural enrichment, through literature, the students can improve their knowledge about culture, especially the culture of the nation of the target language, third, language enrichment, the students also can improve their vocabulary through literature, fourth, personal involvement, the students can directly involve in the target language activity by reading the literary works (Collie & Slater, 2008).

By using a literary work the teacher can help the students to improve their language skills (speaking, reading and writing), their knowledge about the culture of the target language and give them more opportunity to use the target language actively.

Next, we will discuss the implementation of using literature in English language teaching on a class, the literary work that will be used is poetry by William Shakespeare.

#### 4. The Implementation of Teaching English Through Poem

Using poem to teach language makes the students explore themes of universal concern and embody life experiences, observation and the feelings evoked by them. The teacher should select the poem based on the students' interest, the teacher should be creative and understand the students. The implementation of teaching English through poem according to Collie and Slater (2008) is divided into several steps: (i) warm up, (ii) reading the poem, (iii) follow-up.

The activity will be:

##### *Warm up*

The teacher gives explanation about a poem and some aspect related to the selected poem that will be used in the class, for example, the teacher explains about poem and the content of the poem by William Shakespeare entitled 'A Fairy Song'.

##### *Reading the poem*

The teacher reads the poem first and asks the students to listen carefully. For example, the teacher reads the poem by William Shakespeare: "A Fairy Song"

*Over park, over pale,  
Thorough flood, thorough fire!  
I do wander everywhere,  
Swifter than the moon's sphere;  
And I serve the Fairy Queen,  
To drew her orbs upon the green;  
The cowslips tall her pensioners be;  
In their gold coats spots you see;  
Those be rubies, fairy favours;  
In those freckles live their savours;  
I must go seek some dewdrops here,  
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.*

Then asks the selected students to read the poem in front of the class, after that, asks them to work in pairs and analyse the vocabulary and possible meaning of the poem.

*Follow up*

In this step, the teacher asks the students to mention some difficult vocabularies and help them to understand the vocabulary by giving them the clue, then asks them about the content of the poem.

Another way to teach English through poem proposed by Clanfield who mentioned the steps are: (i) warmer, (ii) before reading, (iii) understanding the text, general comprehension, (iv) understanding the language, (vi) follow up activities.

The activity will be:

*Warmer*

This step is quietly similar with what Collie and Slater mentioned before, the teacher should explain about the poem and the content of the poem, but the teacher should also ask the students about what they know about the poem.

*Before reading*

This step is optional, it can also be a part of warming up:

-Pre-teaching very difficult words (note: pre-teaching vocabulary should be approached with caution. Often teachers “kill” a text by spending too much time on the pre-teaching stage. Limit the number of words you cover in this stage. If you have to teach more than seven or eight there is a good chance the text will be too difficult.)

-Predicting. Give students some words from the extract and ask them to predict what happens next. If it is a play, give them a couple of lines of dialogue and ask them to make predictions about the play.

-Giving students a “taste”. Read the first bit of the extract (with their books closed, or papers turned over) at normal speed, even quickly. Ask students to compare what they have understood in pairs. Then ask them to report back to you. Repeat the first bit again. Then ask them to open the book (or turn over the page) and read it for themselves.

*Understanding the text, general comprehension*

The teacher read the poem and asks them to read it themselves to give them an opportunity in using the target language actively and make them enjoy the lesson, also help them to understand the text generally.

*Understanding the language*

Ask the students to mention some difficult words and sentence in the poem because poem usually uses some connotation, for example:

In the poem:

**A Fairy Song (William Shakespeare)**

*Over park, over pale,  
 Thorough flood, thorough fire!  
 I do wander everywhere,  
 Swifter than the moon's sphere;  
 And I serve the Fairy Queen,  
 To drew her orbs upon the green;  
 The cowslips tall her pensioners be;  
 In their gold coats spots you see;  
 Those be rubies, fairy favours;  
 In those freckles live their savours;  
 I must go seek some dewdrops here,  
 And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.*

There will be some difficult words such as **pale, sphere, pensioners** and so on, then give them clues to help them understand the words, and also some connotation sentence like “thorough flood, thorough fire”, the students may be hard to understand the sentence. Help them to understand the sentence.

*Follow up activities*

In this step, evaluate what the students learn from the lesson, have students read each other the poem aloud at the same time, checking for each other's pronunciation and rhythm. Do a whole class choral reading at the end. Ask students to rewrite the poem, changing the meaning but not the structure. Ask students to write or discuss the possible story behind the poem. Who was it for? What led to the writing of this poem? Have a discussion on issues the poem raised and how they relate to the students' lives.

Another way of using the poem in teaching English proposed by Elizabeth and Roe (2007), they are:

Step 1: the teacher tells something about the poem in simple English. He or she may show a picture or chart for this purpose. Thus he or she creates a proper atmosphere for the poem.

Step 2: the teacher gives a model recitation of the poem. Gestures and actions are performed by the teacher wherever possible. Tape recorder for poem recitation may be used if the teacher feels its necessity.

Step 3: difficult words contained in the poem are taken up and dealt with an active participation of the learners. In doing so, the teacher takes up the words and their meanings in simple English.

Step 4: once again model recitation of the poem is given by the teacher.

Step 5: a few students of the class are asked to recite the poem one by one. The other students help to correct any mistakes (if any).

Step 6: the teacher asks the students about their problems in the poem. All the problems of the students are solved as per the need and requirement of the situation.

Step 7: the teacher puts a few comprehension test questions to the students. All efforts are made to get appropriate answers from the students. Some hints or guidelines may be provided by the teacher.

Step 8: in the end, the teacher asks the students to do some assignment at home. It may be learning of poem by heart or writing the summary of the poem in simple English.

Actually, all ways above are quite similar, the writer concludes that the way of using poem in ELT is divided into four steps they are: first, warming up, teacher explains about related aspects and content of the poem; second, reading the poem to understand the content, the teacher reads the poem in front of the class and ask the students to listen carefully; third, understanding the language of the poem, the teacher asks the students to mention some difficult word or sentence in the poem and the teacher helps them to understand those words and sentences by giving the clues; fourth, re-reading the poem, the teacher reads the poem once more and then asks the selected students to read the poem in front of class one by one; fifth, follow up, once again the teacher asks the students about their difficulties of understanding the poem, and helps them to solve the problem then gives them some comprehension question related to the poem.

The point is the teacher helps the students to understand the language and the content of the poem, by so, the students will improve their English language skills (speaking, reading, writing and listening) and their knowledge of the culture.

### **C. CONCLUSION**

Culture and ELT are inseparable, teaching language without culture is like a body without a soul, and there is a crucial aspect that is lost. One of part of the culture is literature, in English language teaching, the use of literature is one of the ways of teaching English through culture.

The use of literature in English language teaching can be as an authentic material that helps the students to directly know about a culture of the nation of the target language (in this case is English), improve their English language skill and their English vocabulary.

There are many kinds of literary works that can be used in English language teaching, such as novel, drama, song, prose, poem, etc., from all of those, the poem can be the one that used by many teachers to teach English language in a classroom.

The way of using poem in English language teaching in a classroom is divided into several steps, they are: first, warming up, teacher explains about



related aspects and content of the poem; second, reading the poem to understand the content, the teacher reads the poem in front of the class and ask the students to listen carefully; third, understanding the language of the poem, the teacher asks the students to mention some difficult word or sentence in the poem and the teacher helps them to understand those words and sentences by giving the clues; fourth, re-reading the poem, the teacher read the poem once more and then asks the selected students to read the poem in front of class one by one; fifth, follow up, once again the teacher asks the student about their difficulties of understanding the poem, and help them to solve the problem then gives them some comprehension question related to the poem.

In short, the use of poem in English language teaching helps the students not only about the English language, but also England culture and other knowledge about England.

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