



AN EVALUATION OF POEMS IN ENGLISH TAUGHT TO INDONESIAN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract

This study aimed to analyse common themes found in the English poems taught to senior high school students. Theme is unstated main idea of a literary work. The object of this study was the poems in English taken from textbooks. This is a content analysis research used in analyzing the poems taken from textbooks. The instrumentations of this research was the researcher myself. The findings of the research showed that not all the poems' theme are related to the teenage life as what Curriculum 2013 required. There were three poems which related to teenage life and fulfil the demand of Curriculum 2013.

Key words: curriculum 2013, poem, topic, theme.

INTRODUCTION

Since 2014 Indonesia has started to use Curriculum 2013 as the base and the reference in education field (Munif, 2015) after using KTSP (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan) since 2006. This change has made a concrete difference in teaching and learning process (Hakim, 2017), especially in teaching English. Curriculum 2013 obliges English teachers to teach literary texts to Senior High School students as in KD 3.4 (Kurikulum 2013: Peminatan). The literary texts that should be taught are poem and song. In this case, poem is taught to second-year students of Senior High School who choose English as their elective subject in specialization class; while song is taught as a compulsory material in English subject. These two texts are being taught for four lesson hours in a week.

Based on Curriculum 2013, the learning outcome of teaching poem to grade XI is the students' ability to get contextual meaning based on its social function, generic structures, and language features of the poem whose topic is relevant with teenage life (Kurikulum 2013: Peminatan). In parallel with that, Dewi (2018) found that the students prefer to read poems about college/school life, love story, and and friendship. Thus, in this case, the English teacher should

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provide suitable poems related to the students' condition as a teenager, their need, and their ability as what Curriculum 2013 has intended.

In relation with the importance of the theme above, finding a poem which theme is suitable with the students is not easy (Frolish, 2012). In addition, Wahyuni and Oktavia (2018) also found that the teachers might face some challenges in finding a poem which suits and align with Curriculum 2013's criteria. Moreover, based on the research that has done by Dewi (2018), she found that it was hard to teach poem to the college students when they did not like the theme of the poem used. In fact, because the change of the curriculum, the author and the publisher are also obliged to create and provide a suitable teaching material as what Curriculum 2013 has intended about the poems for teenager.

In English Language Teaching (ELT) context, some studies are conducted to see how helpful poetry to EFL learners (Finch, 2003 ; Özen and Mohammadzadeh, 2012 ; Mokhtaria, 2012 ; and Kalan, 2014). Other researchers conducted research about approaches that can be used by the teachers in teaching poetry (Kellem, 2009 ; Khatib, 2011 ; Panavelil, 2011). In Indonesian context, a number of studies revealed the findings about the use of some learning models in teaching poetry (Sukini, Andayani, Rohmadi, and Setiawan, 2016 ; Cahyani, Sastromiharjo, and D, 2017 ; Rachmawati, Supriyanto, and Doyin, 2019). However, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, studies about the alignment of the themes in the poems taught to Indonesian senior high school students with Curriculum 2013's criteria is still far between. Therefore, conducting a research about this topic is justified.

Theoretically, this study can be beneficial for the English teachers in considering an appropriate and a suitable material that is poems in form of text to help them and to engage their attention in learning and understanding a poem. In addition, not only for the teachers who teach poem now, but also to the pre-service teachers that will go to implement their knowledge and their ability in teaching English. The researcher hopes that pre-service teachers will teach based on what the students' age, especially in teaching poem.

Furthermore, as poem is obliged to be taught to Indonesian senior high school students, it can be divided in two forms. These are *closed* and *open* forms. According to Kennedy and Gioia (2010), a poetry in *closed* form has a set of patterns in it, such as *end rhyme, rhyme scheme, meter, and stanza*. In contrast, still in Kennedy and Gioia (2010), a poetry in *open* form does not follow any set of guidelines. Moreover, Lethbridge and Mildorf (2003), stated that poetry can be divided into three major types. These are lyric, narrative, and descriptive/didactic poetry. Kirszner and Meandell (2016) stated that every poem has a theme on it. Theme is unstated main idea of a literary work. Furthermore, theme in literature, sometimes is used to refer to the basic issue or problem that the speaker wants to tell the reader about (Ministry of Education, 2019). Then, Kirszner (2016) said that, one reader may understand one theme of the poem which means that it differs from others.

At the end, teaching poem which relate to the students' condition as a teenager is very important as Curriculum 2013 intended. In parallel with that, Dewi (2018) found that the students prefer to read poems about college/school

life, love story, and and friendship. In parralel with them, according to Mulyani (2018), based on Curriculum 2013, in poem lesson, the English teacher should provide poems which are related to teenage life. In this case, the students are expected to catch contextual meaning related to social function, generic structures, and langugae features of the poem (Kurikulum, 2013). Therefore, this thing encourages the researcher to do a research about the alignment of the themes of English poems taught to senior high school students with Curriculum 2013.

RESEARCH METHOD

This is a content analysis research. Content analysis was a research design where the researcher does not require the collection of data from people. Content analysis can be defined as the study of recorded information in form of texts, media, physical items (Krippendorff, 2004). In addition, according to Cole (1988), content analysis was a method of analyzing written work such as book and magazine, verbal and visual communication method. Likewise, Schreier in Elo and Kyngas (2014) suggested to be careful in using this method, because this method asks to analyze and interpret the meaning of the text.

The object of this research is the poems in English textbooks for grade XI students at senior high schools. The total number of these poems were 15 poems which were taken from two textbooks as an official source and the other two textbooks as suplemenatry sources. Then, In this case, the researcher will become the instrument of this research, because the researcher is the only one who collect, explore, examine anad interpret the data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Research Finding (tentative)

The data of the research were the poems taught to Indonesian senior high school students. They were taken from English textbooks that have been borrowed by the researcher from the teachers. The data were analysed by using adapted the steps provided by Bengtsson (2016) about how to plan and and perform a content analysis research by using content analysis. The data categorized and labelled by the researcher based on their forms, types and themes. Finally, the researcher drew a conclusion whether the themes of the poems used in the Englih textbooks aligns with Curriculum 2013 or not. In addition, the researcher also analyzed the theme that were most commonly used in the poems in English textbooks. Therefore, this last step was the way to interpret the finding result of this study.

As the result, the researcher found that there were major topics of the poems in English textbooks. These topics were life lesson, natural phenomenon, friendship, war/conflict and song. In addition, each of them appeared with different frequency. For example, *Invictus* which had a topic about life lesson because throughout the the poem, in every stanza, the speaker voice was reflecting its literal meaning about what message he wanted to deliver.

Next poem were *The Road Not Taken* and *Dreams*, also had a topic about life lesson. The speaker in the *The Road Not Taken* likened the choices he should take as the two roads in the wood. Similarly, *Dreams* had clearly declare about their importance in life. In the fourth poem, *Tress* provided a topic about natural

phenomenon. In other words, the usage of the trees in human life. The fifth and sixth poems, *Our Frindship* and *Forever Friend* shared similar topic, that was about friendship that the speakers had.

Moreover, the topic of *Little Roses Tree* was about natural phenomenon about how the roses looked like. In similar with it, *Brooms*, also had a topic about natural phenomenon which talked about a tall tree looked in the storm. Then, *Everyone Sang* as the ninth poem provided a topic about singing. The speaker was singing to show his joyful feeling. Furthermore, *The Night Will Never Stay* also served the topic about natural phenomenon, how night and its beauty will gone. Besides, *My Star* in the following had a topic about natural phenomenon, where someone was talking about stars in the sky. Then, *I Wandered Lonely as A Cloud* had a topic about natural phenomenon, how beautiful daffodils around the lake. In addition, *The Blind Men and The Elephant* has a topic about life lesson about six men who touched and recognized the elephant for the first time. Finally, the last two poems that were *World Peace* and *Scars* used the topic of war/conflict topic about what happened in a conflict country.

Therefore, it can be concluded that there were five major topics of the fifteen poems above. The most commonly topic used was natural phenomenon which has six poems belong to it. In the second place, there was about four poems that had the topic about life lesson. Additionally, in the third place followed by the topic about friendship and war/conflict, where each of them had two poems. Then, in the last position there was a topic about song which had one poem that belong to it. These six topics were the major topics about how the themes were visualized.

2. Discussion

The criteria of a poem that has been intended by Curriculum 2013 is the poems related to the students' life as a teenager (Kurikulum 2013: Peminatan). Eventhough as the finding above, the theme used are suitable with the students' life, yet in term of topic, not all the topics of the poem are related to the students' life as a teenager. In other words, there are certain poems that are not suitable for the students. It can be seen in the poem *I Wandered Lonely as A Cloud* which has topic about daffodils. Basically, in Indonesia there is no daffodils which make the students probably difficult to relate to this poem. In accordance with that fact, Clark and Lant (2018) found that unrelated topic can make the students are not interested in learning poem (40%). This finding is in second place of the reasons why they do not engage in poem lesson, after the students found that it was boring (50%). This reason can also happen to Indonesian students. In conclusion, these thing can also happen to Indonesian students who think that daffodils do not relevant with their background.

Moreover, in relation with Curriculum 2013 criteria above about the poem related to teenage life, Hipson (2019) found that the topic about love story, depression, anxiety and friendship are interesting for the students and they show the positive attitude toward these topics. Moreover, Funk (2016) found that most of poem showed their interest in poem lesson with the topics such as self identity, facade, different form of bondage, innocence and more. Then, Dewi (2018) found

that the topics about love story, friendship and school life are engaging for the students.

In fact, from the 15 poems above, only three poems which align with the topics above. These poems are, My Star which has a topic about love story, Our Frindship and Forever Friends share the same topic that is friendship. The rest of the poems are only suitable in general because they have moral values and advices that the students can learn about. It can be concluded, the textbooks used by the English teachers in teaching poem to Indonesian senior high school students contained the poems which the theme did not align with the Curriculum 2013.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on findings, there are five major topics and four major themes of the poems taught second year students of senior high school in teaching poem. Although the themes found give the good lessons for life, however they do not align with what Curriculum 2013 has intended about the theme of the poem in teaching poem, that is the theme which related to the teenage life. In conclusion, there is a theme which aligns with Curriculum 2013, that is the theme about a bestfriend means everything and she/he is so worthy in our life.

As only one theme that can fullfil the requirement of Curriculum 2013, the rest of the poems do not. It happens because the author and publisher of the books do not understanding what the Curriculum has intended before. Moreover, it can be caused by the institution in charge in making curriulum does not describe in detail what kind of teenage life is really desired.

Based on the findings and discussion, there are some suggestions for the pre-service teacher and the teacher. First, the English teacher should consider the condition of the students as teenager when teaching poem to them, and make sure that the themes used in the poems are related to them. Then, they also need to understand what the meaning and moral value beyond the poems they teach. If the teacher does not know what the poem talks about, the students will not be interested in learning it. Furthermore, for those who are interested, they will face the difficulties in catching the meaning without a guide from the teacher. In addition, the teachers can also use other poems taken from internet and from what they have discussed in English Teachers Organization (MGMP). Finally, for the publisher or institution who are in charge in providing the teaching material, it is better to understand and comprehend about what a curriculum want.

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