

IMPROVING STUDENTS' COMPREHENSION OF POEMS USING TWO STAY-TWO STRAY STRATEGY

Hamiddin

Dosen Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FKIP UNISMA

Abstract: *The study is directed to improve students' comprehension of poems using the Two Stay-Two Stray strategy. The subject of this study is 23 students of the sixth semester of English department of FKIP at Islamic University of Malang. This study uses collaborative action research design which consists of four main steps: planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting. The data is taken from quiz, observation checklist and field notes. The findings indicate that using TS-TS strategy can improve the students' comprehension of poems. The average score of students' test in Cycle 2 is 80 and the students' active involvement in Cycle 2 is 86%. The data are obtained from the implementation of TS-TS strategy in improving students' comprehension of poems.*

Abstrak: *Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan penguasaan siswa terhadap puisi dengan menggunakan strategi Two stay-Two Stray. Subjek penelitian adalah 23 orang mahasiswa semester 6 Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FKIP Universitas Islam Malang. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian tindakan kelas yang terdiri atas empat langkah utama, perencanaan, pelaksanaan, observasi dan refleksi. Data diperoleh dengan menggunakan kuis, observasi dan catatan lapangan. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi TS-TS dapat meningkatkan penguasaan siswa terhadap puisi. Rata-rata skor siswa paa siklus 2 adalah 80 dan keterlibatan aktivitas siswa di siklus 2 adlah 86% . Data ini diperoleh dri implementasi strategi TS-TS dalam meningkatkan penguasaan siswa terhadap puisi.*

Key Words: *comprehension of poems, Two Stay-Two Stray Strategy*

INTRODUCTION

Literature is a product of culture. Literature is created from human activities and it is born of man's timeless desire to understand, express, and finally share experiences. Literary works reflect about parts of human lives such as values, morals, experiences, feelings, thoughts, cultures and interests. As product of culture, the literary works are a medium of the

writers to communicate and share about their lives, knowledge, experiences, and problems to the readers. A literary work, like prose, poetry, and drama, may give a certain impression and contribution to the readers such as giving the readers about awareness of the truth of life, giving personal pleasure to the readers, feeding heart of the readers, and helping the readers to be cultured man. Therefore, it is important for the students to read

and study literary works, because literary works not only provide certain styles of language use but also they can increase and enrich students' knowledge, experiences about human problems.

In English language teaching settings, many literary texts are used as additional passages. The use of literature in language teaching gives many contributions to increase students' achievement such as creative thinking, motivation, and enjoyment. One of the genres of literature that is taught in language teaching is poetry. The teaching of poetry should address the students to prepare them in visualizing, searching for main ideas and understanding the poems. The students must be addressed on comprehension of poems both the structure and the contents. In comprehension process, the students read and identify important points or information of poems in which the information are useful for the students in improving their achievement and their literary competence of poems.

Comprehension of poems provides several educational benefits to the students. Sarac (2003:17-20) in Hismanoglu (2005) divides the benefits of comprehending poems into four points. First, poems provide students with a different viewpoint towards language use by going beyond the known usages and rules of grammar, syntax and vocabulary. Second, poems can trigger unmotivated students to explore different interpretations. Third, poems evoke feelings and thoughts in heart and in mind. The last, poems make students familiar with figure of speech (i.e. simile, metaphor, irony, personification, imagery, etc.) due to their being a part of daily language use.

The objectives of teaching poetry have important role and they should be clear and appropriate to the level of students. The success of the teaching poetry is measured by how far the objectives of teaching can be reached. Tiwari (2008) proposes the objective of teaching poetry into two objectives: general objectives and specific objectives. The general objective of teaching poetry basically is to increase students' appreciation of poems which is drawn into several points. In addition, the objectives of teaching poetry are to address the students to be able to understand, appreciate, and analyze the literary works deeply in order to increase the students' comprehension and other achievement such as critical thinking, cultural competence, personal pleasure, and language competence.

To achieve the objective of teaching poetry, the teachers usually faced some problems and challenges when they are teaching poetry. The

problems of teaching poetry commonly place on the use of materials, the use of teaching technique, and students' comprehension of poems. In fact, the problems of teaching poetry are found in literature class of sixth semester students of English Department of FKIP Unisma. The problems are identified from his teaching experiences in literature class and the result of preliminary study that was conducted on 16th of November 2009. The problems of literature class can be identified as follows.

The first problem is the students have low ability in comprehending poems both its structure and its content. It is indicated by the scores of students' test in which 2 students (9%) get score ≥ 80 ; 3 students (13%) get score 70 – 79; 11 students (48%) get score 60 – 69; 3 students (13%) get score 50 – 54; and 4 students (17%) get score 0 – 49. Accordingly, the students' comprehension of poems is not satisfactory. The current data on the result of students' test reveal that the students' average score was 59.7 (fifty nine point seven). Therefore, it indicates that most of the students still have low comprehension of poems.

Considering the facts above, there is an urgent need to implement a strategy or technique that can help solve these problems. In this case, the dynamic strategy of teaching poetry should be considered. The appropriate teaching strategy, like cooperative learning strategies, help the teacher to solve the problems in the class because the cooperative strategies employ student-centered activities rather than teacher-centered activities. It can guide and facilitate learning process in order to enable the students learn and create a better atmosphere of learning. The strategy also may attract the students' attention toward comprehension of poems and increase their motivation by actively involving in learning. In addition, the use of appropriate strategy in teaching poetry can solve the problems occurring in poetry class.

One strategy that can be applied in teaching poetry is cooperative learning strategy because besides cooperative learning is as an effective instructional method, it is also a successful way to enhance social and academic development among students. In this case, to improve the students' comprehension of poems and students' active involvement in learning process, this study chooses and uses Two Stay-Two Stray (*henceforth: TS-TS*) strategy.

TS-TS is a cooperative learning strategy that is adapted from Kagan's One Stay-Three Stray. TS-TS will work well if students have a product or

information to share. It also gives students experience in gathering information and reporting back to their teammates. TS-TS strategy essentially is a group discussion model. Each member of group has its own responsibilities (two students become 'strayers' and other two students become 'stayers'). According to Crawford (2005) TS-TS offers a low-threat forum where students can exchange ideas and build social skills such as asking probing questions. In this activity the students are encouraged to contribute their ideas and opinion to their group and other groups. TS-TS strategy is designed into small groups of students consisting of four students. The students work in small (four-member) groups of mixed ability, including one high achiever, two average achievers, and one low achiever. The groups discuss the topic that is given by the teacher. In TS-TS strategy, students are responsible for helping other members to learn, achieve the group goal and share information with other groups.

METHOD

The research design of the study is action research. This study used collaborative classroom action research. This study is designed to apply a strategy to solve the problems in poetry class especially improving students' comprehension of poems. The design of this classroom action research is a cyclical process adapted from the model proposed by Kemmis and Taggart (1988). It comprises four main steps, namely planning, implementation of action, observation, and reflection. Before implementing the four steps of classroom action research, the researcher conducted a preliminary study to know the real problems in poetry class. Preliminary study aims at identifying the students' problem in comprehending English poem and how the problems should be overcome.

The study is conducted at Islamic University of Malang, which is located at Jl. MT Haryono 193 Malang. The subjects of the study are the sixth semester students, class B of English Department of academic year 2009/2010. The numbers of the students are 23 students. All students have the same treatments in the teaching and learning process.

The criteria of success are set up in order to check whether the implementation of Two Stay-Two Stray strategy succeeds or fails. These criteria are also used as reference to stop or continue the cycle. The criteria of success in this study reflect the area of concerns with the process and the product of the teaching and learning English poems. The first

criteria of success is 100 percent of students at least get minimum score 55 and the mean score of students' test at least 70 in comprehending English poem. This data is taken from the test that given the students at the end of implementation. Second criteria of success is 65 percent or 15 of the number of the students are actively involved during teaching and group discussion activities. The data of students' active involvement is taken from observation checklist and fieldnotes.

FINDINGS

The research findings are presented on the analysis of the collected data deriving from the implementation of Two Stay-Two Stray (*henceforth: TS-TS*) strategy in improving students' comprehension of poems of the teaching of poetry. The data and findings of the study were presented based on the result of students' quiz, observation checklist, and field notes.

Findings were obtained from the implementation of the TS-TS strategy. The use of the strategy was actually group discussions of each meeting each of which consisted of at least four students. After students seated in groups, the students were addressed to discuss a poem or song lyric and answer the questions related to structure and content of a poem. Group discussions were conducted in three meetings and one meeting was test for comprehension of poems in each cycles. The objective of test was to measure students' ability in comprehending poems while the objective of observation checklist and field notes were to record the students active involvement during teaching and learning process. The following were the findings of the research.

The implementation of TS-TS strategy are used to increase students' academic achievement. In this case, the students' academic achievement is about comprehension of poems. The strategy is used to improve students' comprehension of poems by following its procedures. The comprehension of poems covers comprehension of the sound devices (rhyme, rhyme scheme, stanza form, repetition, alliteration, etc.) and poetic devices (metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole, symbol, etc.) and content (tone, theme and message).

TS-TS strategy provides the students to express a desire to be active participants in comprehending poems. They also have positive attitudes towards group work in order to complete the purpose of learning. Here, to implement TS-TS strategy, the

teacher considers the five essential components of cooperative learning activities. Abrami et al. (1995) states that the five essential components of cooperative learning are: (a) positive interdependence, (b) individual accountability, (c) face to face interaction, (d) social skills, and (e) group processing. In addition, the activities of TS-TS strategy is covered all components of cooperative learning both in home-group discussions and stray-group discussions. During the activities of group discussions, the teacher has to monitor and control the students' group discussions in order that the group discussions run well and follows the procedures of TS-TS strategy.

To improve the students' ability in comprehending poems using TS-TS strategy, the teacher has designed three parts of comprehending poems. The first part, the students are addressed to comprehend the structures of poem (sound devices and poetic devices). The second part, the students are addressed to comprehend the content of poem. The last part, the students are addressed to comprehend the poem both its structures and its contents. Further, the students are also given the guided questions in order that the students can comprehend poems well. Ellis et al. (1989) state that group discussion requires skill in questioning. The guided questions are to lead the group discussion on the topic.

Students' Comprehension of Poems

The students' comprehension of poems were poor before the TS-TS strategy was implemented. It was indicated the preliminary study in which 2 students (9%) got ≥ 80 ; 3 students (13%) got 70 – 79; 11 students (48%) got 55 – 69; 3 students (13%) got 50 – 54; 4 students (17%) got 0 – 49, and mean score of the students' test was 59.7. In Academic Guidelines Book (*Buku Pedoman Akademik*, 2010) of Islamic University of Malang, the students who got score between 55 – 69 were considered passing the course. In this case, there were 7 students did not pass the course yet. Although the students who got score between 55 – 69 were considered that they pass the course, but they were considered that they still had low ability in comprehending poems. In addition, 78% students were considered that had low ability in comprehending poems.

The improvement of students' ability in comprehending poems after the implementation of TS-TS strategy was described in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2. The result of quiz 1 of Cycle 1 showed that that 8

students (35%) got 80 to 100; 12 students (52%) got 70 to 79; 2 students (9%) got 55 to 69; 1 student (4%) got 0 to 49, and the average score of the students' test was 76. The average score of students' test showed an increase 16.3 points that was from 59.7 to 76, and only one student who still did not pass the course yet. Furthermore, the result of quiz 2 of Cycle 2 showed that 19 students (83%) got 80 to 100, 3 students (13%) got 70 to 79, and 1 student (4%) got 55 to 69 while the average score of the students' test in Cycle 2 was 80. Here, the average score of students' test showed an increase 4 points that was from 76 to 80, and all the students (23) passed the course. In line with the positive impact of cooperative learning strategy, Abrami et al. (1995) stated that cooperative learning stress on increasing students' academic achievement through a good social relationship with one another in group work. Therefore, TS-TS strategy as a part of cooperative learning strategies had been proved that this strategy had improved students' ability in comprehending poems.

Students' Involvement

The students' active involvement during the implementation of TS-TS strategy was essential component. Since the students' active involvement also showed their motivation and their interest in comprehending poems. Abrami et al. (1995) stated that TS-TS strategy provides the students to express a desire to be active participants in comprehending poems. They also have positive attitudes towards group work in order to complete the purpose of learning. Their positive attitude toward group work of this study was reported by the collaborator. The collaborator reported that the average of students' involvement in Cycle 1 was 71% (16 to 17 students were actively involved) and the average of students' involvement in Cycle 2 was 86% (19 to 20 students were actively involved). Meanwhile, the TS-TS strategy was effective in motivating and encouraging students to be actively involved during teaching and learning process. The students' motivation and involvement had proved that the learning process using TS-TS strategy in teaching of poetry was fun, enjoyable, and interesting. According to Wu & Wu (2008), the implementation of particular strategies and approaches in teaching poetry that is stressed on student-centered activities, can make the students enjoying and inviting students' participation during teaching and learning process.

In relation with the students' involvement in the class through group discussions, Abrami et al. (1995:2) stated the group discussions of cooperative learning encouraged the quality of interaction among students. The students' interaction occurred in each meeting of Cycle 1 and Cycle 2. In Cycle 1, in the first meeting, there were 11 to 12 students (51%) who were actively involved during the implementation of the strategy. In the second meeting there were 16 to 17 students (71%) who were actively involved during the implementation of the strategy, and in the third meeting there were 20 students (87%) who were actively involved during the implementation of the strategy. Whereas the average percentage of the students' active involvement of all meetings was 71% . It meant that most of students (16 to 17 students) were very active and enthusiastic in following the teaching and learning process.

Cycle 2 showed that in the first meeting there was 16 to 17 students (86%), in the second meeting there was 17 students (85%), and in the third meeting there was 17 to 18 students (88%) who were actively involved during the implementation of TS-TS strategy. The average percentage of the students' involvement of all meetings of Cycle 2 were 17 to 18 students (86%) who were actively involved during the teaching and learning process. It indicated that most of students were very active and enthusiastic in following the teaching and learning process in which the TS-TS strategy had been implemented. Since, in home-group discussion and strayer-group discussion the students have chance to complete their works together, try to share their works and get feedback from other groups. Those activities are very useful to increase and motivate students to comprehend poems well.

The implementation of this strategy contributed several positive factors in improving the students' comprehension of poems. They were; first, the students could identify and comprehend some elements of poem step by step. Second, they could understand how to comprehend poem because they were guided by some questions related to the poems. Third, they could learn and help each other in completing the tasks. The fourth, they could complete the task effectively because they corrected each other.

However, the TS-TS strategy also had weaknesses in its implementation. First, forming groups need an extra effort from the researcher to encourage the students to work together and help each other. Second, it took more time to monitor and

control the groups. Third, one group could not give good information and good feedback other groups. Fourth, the time allotment always became a problem in which the students need an extra time especially in completing their works. In conclusion, despite of having many positive factors, the TS-TS strategy also have some weaknesses that need to anticipate by the researcher in implementing this strategy.

To anticipate the weaknesses of implementation of TS-TS strategy, the researcher was conducted some activities. First, the reseacher limited the member of group discussion of which each group minimally consisted of four students and miximally consisted of five students. The limitation of students in a group was to make sure that each group member participated. In cooperative learning group, Slavin (1995) stated that to monitor the participating of member in group, a group must have a leader. In this study the groups of students chose freely a leader of their group and decided the members who would be 'stayers'and strayers.

Second, the researcher provided paper's notes for the 'strayers'and provided the guided questions related to the structure and content of poems. The strayers' notes functioned to know and record the information that the 'strayers' got from 'stayers' of other groups and the 'stayers' gave feedback and information to the strayers. Whereas, the function of guided questions were to address the students' discussion on the topic or sub topic and the objective of learning of each meeting could be achieved. In this way, Ellis et al. (1989) stated that group discussion should be guided by using guided questions in order to lead the group discussion on the topic. In this study, the researcher also encouraged and motivated the students to learn together and share their knowledge with others, because learning together trained students to be social person and it could be increased their achievement of comprehension of poems.

Third, the researcher explained the objective of learning and the process of comprehension of poems. The teacher gave the examples of how to comprehend the structure and content of poems. Giving examples of how to comprehend the the structure and content of poems could guide students on right way of comprehension of poems. In the line with this, Roe et al (1995:332) stated that teacher should explain the process of learning and its purpose to the students, because the group discussion needed time to complete a particular assignments. In this part, the students should understand exactly what was expected of them

during group discussion activities and they needed to have a thorough understanding of the topic at hand; otherwise, their misconceptions could inhibit their learning. To control and monitor time of discussion, the researcher did not only explain the rules and time allotment of group discussion orally but also he wrote the rules and time allotment in written form. Besides the researcher controlled and monitored the students' activities in group discussions, he also gave responses toward students questions or comments during discussions.

In conclusion, all findings of the research showed that cooperative learning strategy especially TS-TS strategy was successful in improving students' and promoting students to be involved actively in group discussions. The teacher of literature should also consider some things that might influence the implementation of this strategy such as procedures, the strengths and weaknesses of the strategy, the use of appropriate media and material in improving students' comprehension of poem and attracting the students' attention and involvement during the teaching and learning process. In other words, the discussion had revealed that theoretical view point of TS-TS strategy had supported the findings related to the improvement of the students' comprehension of poems and the students' active involvement during teaching and learning process.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

TS-TS strategy has improved or increased students' comprehension of poems and enhanced the participation of the sixth semester students of English Department at FKIP Unisma. TS-TS strategy has given theoretical and practical ways in comprehending poems step by step, asking and answering the questions, sharing opinions, helping each other, and giving feedback to complete the teacher's tasks.

The improvement of students' ability in comprehending poems is shown by the average score of students' test. The student achievement increases from 59.7 in preliminary study to 76 in the Cycle 1 and 80 in the Cycle 2. TS-TS strategy also encourages the students to involve actively in teaching and learning process. Their involvement during teaching and learning process in Cycle 1 is 71% and in Cycle 2 is 86%. It means that most of the students are active and they have good motivation in studying and comprehending poems.

After the TS-TS strategy is implemented and

developed through two cycles, it is concluded that the appropriate model TS-TS strategy in teaching poetry encompasses the following procedures: (1) activating students' background knowledge by asking questions about the elements of poetry (structure and content), (2) giving guidances how to identify the elements of poetry in a poem, (3) dividing students into several groups each of which consists of four students (a group should consist of high, average, and low achiever students) and giving the groups freedom in deciding the leader of group discussion, the stayers, and 'strayers' (4) deciding and explaining the rules of group discussion orally or in written form, (5) giving the groups the same poem, guided questions, answer's sheet, and strayer's note, (6) asking the groups to discuss the poem and complete their work with certain duration of time, (7) asking two group members (strayers) to leave their home group and stray individually to other groups while the remaining group members ('stayers') explain what their group has done to the visiting 'strayers'. The strayer's discussion is limited by certain duration of time, (8) asking the 'strayers' return to their home groups and report what they have got, while 'stayers' report on the feedback they have received, (9) asking the groups to revise and complete their work, and another round of Stay-Stray can take place with new 'strayers' if the time is enough, (10) clarifying and discussing the poem that the students have been discussed. During the home group discussion and stray-group discussion, the teacher monitors and controls students' activities and responds to the students' questions.

Therefore, the implementation of TS-TS strategy is very useful in teaching poetry to improve students' comprehension of poems and increase students' participation during the teaching and learning proces by following its procedures. The strengths of the TS-TS strategy are placed on the its procedures and principles of learning in which the students are set up to work cooperatively and collaboratively in completing the tasks.

Based on the conclusion above, the suggestions are addressed to English teachers and the future researchers. The teachers of literature are recommended that they use TS-TS strategy to improve the students' comprehension of poems. The teachers can use this strategy for other subject such as prose and drama. The strategy provides some procedures that should be followed by the teachers and the teachers should give more attention how to control students' discussion in groups or with other

groups. The future researchers are suggested that they can use this research as a reference for conducting further research in the same field or other literature subjects by following its procedures.

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