

STUDENTS' RESPONSES TOWARD THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PARAPHRASING TECHNIQUE IN ENGLISH POETRY CLASS

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Abstract: Students' Responses toward The Implementation of Paraphrasing Technique in English Poetry Class. This article aimed at describing the students' responses toward the paraphrasing technique implemented in an English poetry class. This article developed from an action research conducted at two Poetry classes in the academic year of 2012/2013 in English Education Department of UNDISHA. The results indicated that the students responded positively toward the implementation of the technique, especially in four aspects, i.e. (1) it involved their active participation; (2) it could solve problems caused by the language deviation; (3) it could increase the students' sensitivity in interpreting culture, symbol and figurative language used in poetry; (4) it also improved the students understanding of some language components, such as vocabulary and grammar. The students' positive responses were also followed by their improvement in understanding English language poems.

Keywords: english poems, paraphrasing technique, students' responses

Abstrak: Respons Mahasiswa terhadap Implementasi Teknik Parafrase pada Kelas Puisi Bahasa Inggris. Artikel ini bertujuan menggambarkan respons mahasiswa tentang implementasi teknik parafrase pada kelas puisi Bahasa Inggris. Artikel ini dibuat dari sebuah penelitian tindakan kelas yang dilakukan pada dua kelas puisi, pada tahun ajaran 2012/2013 di Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris UNDIKSHA. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa merespon positif pelaksanaan teknik ini, terutama dalam 4 aspek, yaitu: (1) mampu melibatkan mahasiswa secara aktif, (2) dapat memecahkan permasalahan penyimpangan bahasa pada puisi, (3) meningkatkan sensitivitas mahasiswa dalam menginterpretasi budaya, simbol dan majas, (4) membantu meningkatkan beberapa kompo-nen bahasa seperti kosakata dan struktur bahasa. Respons positif mahasiswa diikuti dengan peningkatan kemampuan mahasiswa dalam memahami puisi Bahasa Inggris.

Kata-kata Kunci: puisi bahasa inggris, teknik parafrase, respon mahasiswa

Although English Education Department of UNDIKSHA (further mentioned as EED) has education scope i.e. producing English teacher, or in other word to run the function as an educational department, but it has also literature courses in its curriculum. Many language experts (Povey, 1967; Widowson, 1975; Cummins, 1994; and Khatib, 2011) mentioned that literature has positive influences in learning language.

Literature has three major kinds. They are prose, poetry and drama. Among these three

kinds of literature poetry is considered to be the most different. Perrine (1982) stated that poetry is the most concise one. One of the most definable characteristics of the poetic form is economy of language. Compare to other literature forms, poetry has the shortest form of language. Thus, Perrine (1982) said that it says the most with the fewest words. However, despite this unique characteristic, as other kinds of literature poetry also contributes to the improvement of language learning.

It is believed that poetry can enhance productive skills as well as promoting some positive learning function. Smart (2005) found that some productive skills can be enhanced through poetry such as communicative speaking activities, pronunciation, and writing activities. Moreover Holmes & Moulton (2001) stated that poems can promote a number of positive learning functions such as grammar, awareness of phrase and sentence structure, interactive modeling, collaborative group, cooperative group, inductive thinking, sensory stimuli, sharing and expression. Also, because of its rhythm and word choice, poetry is a good authentic material to teach some productive skill such as communicative speaking activities, pronunciation, and writing activities. Moreover, the varied structure of its form makes poems appropriate tools to teach basic concepts of grammar. Poems are, after all, authentic texts. This is a great motivator. Poems are often rich in cultural references, and they present a wide range of learning opportunities.

Furthermore, students can write poetry in the target language to express feeling that has meaning and relevance for them, instead of being restricted by grammatical inadequacy to non-personal, syntactical construction. For example, a student may encourage writing a poem about their part-time job and what they feel about it. To do this the teacher may provide one poem to motivate the students to express their feeling

However understanding poetry is not easy. Infact, among three kinds of literature (prose, poetry and drama) poetry is believed as the most difficult. While many language expert agree that poetry promotes language acquisition, they will also add that poetic concept and cultural assumption are usually difficult for EFL learners to understand (Finch, 2003). Hirvela and Boyle (1988) reported that only 6% of Hongkong, Chinese college students love poetry more than other kinds of literature and 73% stated that poetry is the most difficult literature. Poetry has been taken as a difficult subject for most students especially students of EFL. This view keeps this type of linguistic expression out of typical EFL classroom. In fact, in EFL situation in which students have a little English exposure, students may say "who needs poetry?" as a frequent objection that poetry ought not to be studied at all

The difficulty of learning poetry or understanding it is derived from the nature of poetry itself which has different characteristics from other literature like prose and drama. Some students who have no problem understanding and enjoying prose may find that understanding poetry difficult. Naturally, language used in poetry very often invites readers to have multi or different interpretation. More-over, the poetic language in poetry allows it to have some language deviation from prosaic language (Sulaiman, 2009) in terms of syntax, morphology, phonology and language structure or grammar. The multi interpretation and language deviation are the nature of poetry that makes it difficult to learn or to understand.

The nature of poetry which makes it difficult to understand becomes a great challenge for English poetry learners especially who learn English as a foreign language. The students of EED UNDIKSHA also find learning English poetry difficult. Based on the previous research about the profile of students' problems in learning poetry which has been done to EED students, it was found that the most selected problem was in understanding the idea in English poetry, it is selected by 84.17 % of students (or 117 students out of 139 students). These students stated that they faced difficulty in understanding English poetry especially understanding the figurative meaning instead of literal meaning (Utami: 2012).

Based on the result of observation and interview, it was found that this problem, beside by the nature of poetry itself, was triggered by the ineffective technique used in the class which does not effectively involve all students in conveying the poetry meaning. The interview toward the lecturer found that the technique used in poetry class was discussion technique. Though discussion technique has some advantages but it also has disadvantages. Ali (2010) mention the weakness of discussion technique is the way it can not effectively involve all students; bright students often dominate the discussion while low achiever tend to be passive learner who listen to the discussion. This ineffective student involvement makes low achievers do less learning in class, which resulted to inability in understanding English poetry.

To solve the problem in understanding English poetry, Esten (1995: 31-56) suggest 10 guidances in understanding poetry. *First*, reader should consider the title as the key hole to under-

stand the meaning. *Second*, reader should look for the dominant words used or key words in the poem. *Third*, try to understand the connotative and denotative meaning. *Fourth*, reader should see the language structure to convey the meaning. *Fifth*, reader can change the poetry into prose form. *Sixth*, reader should try to interpret all the pronouns in the poetry. *Seventh*, try to relate the meaning of each line and from one stanza to other stanza. *Eighth*, reader should see the implicit meaning. *Ninth*, reader should notice the form of the poetry. *Tenth*, any interpretation should match all clues in the entire text.

Furthermore, Perrine (1982) also mention several important ways that help in understanding poetry. They are (1) read poem more than once; (2) keep a dictionary with you; (3) read so you hear the sounds of the words; (4) pay careful attention to what the poem is saying; (5) practice reading poems out loud - read affectionately, read slow enough

Beside the guidances mentioned above, the problems of understanding poetry can be also solved by translating the poems into Indonesian. One of translation experts, Andre Laverre pay huge interest in poetry translation. He proposed seven strategies for translating poetry as quoted by Bassnett (2002:87), they are phonemic translation, literal translation, metrical translation, poetry into prose, thymed translation, blank verse translation and interpretation. Lefevere explained them as follows. *First, phonemic translation*, means reproducing the SL sound in the TL while at the same time producing an acceptable paraphrase of the sense. Lefevere comes to the conclusion that although this works moderately well in the translation of onomatopoeia, the overall result is clumsy and often devoid of sense altogether. *Second, literal translation*, emphasizes on word-for-word translation distorts the sense and the syntax of the original. *Third, metrical translation*, means the reproduction of the SL metre. Lefevere concludes that, like literal translation, this method concentrates on one aspect of the SL text at the expense of the text as a whole. *Fourth, poetry into prose*. Here Lefevere concludes that distortion of the sense, communicative value and syntax of the SL text results from this method, although not to the same extent as with the literal or metrical types of translation. *Fifth, rhymed translation*, where the translator 'enters into a double bondage' of metre and rhyme. Lefevere's conclusions here are particularly harsh, since he

feels that the end product is merely a 'caricature' of Catullus. *Sixth, blank verse translation*. Again the restrictions imposed on the translator by the choice of structure are emphasized, although the greater accuracy and higher degree of literalness obtained are also noted. *Seventh, interpretation*. Under this heading, Lefevere discusses what he calls *versions* where the substance of the SL text is retained but the form is changed, and *imitations* where the translator produces a poem of his own which has 'only title and point of departure, if those, in common with the source text'.

Each method mentioned above has weaknesses. None of them can be used to translate the poetry perfectly. However, *Free verse translation* is the most frequently used (Sulaiman: 2009). Through this method, translator can use the accurate word in the target language. Though, of course the rhyme of the poetry will be destructed or physically different, but it will have similar semantic.

Besides translating poetry, other way to help reader understanding poetry is by paraphrasing it. A paraphrase is a restatement in prose of the content of a poem in such a way as to keep the meaning while changing the diction and form using your own writing, avoiding exact quotation. In addition the use of paraphrase is a good test of your understanding of the poem you have read, for the purpose of clarity but the music and images are lost. In fact the poetry is lost. (Holman, 1986: 359). The goal in a paraphrase is to clarify the content by re-seeing and recreating each word in every line. Thus, paraphrase may be actually longer than the original source.

Furthermore, according to Kennedy and Gioia (1995), paraphrasing technique is a technique of understanding poetry by writing what stated in the poetry in one own words: the main ideas, and the implicit meaning that is reinforced through particular components of poetry such as sounds, tone, pattern, rhyme, and figurative language.

There are two kinds of paraphrasing technique, dependent paraphrasing and independent paraphrasing. Independent paraphrasing may involve changes in vocabulary, length, parts of speech and sentence structure. In short, it uses the writer own words to reword the original poetry. Meanwhile, dependent paraphrasing means word addition to the lines of poetry to make the meaning clear. Here, instead of replacing the original words, the writer add some

new words; all original words are still used. Paraphrasing technique demands all students to be actively involved to interpret the poetry's intended meaning.

How to do a good paraphrase? Sulaiman (2009) stated that paraphrase involves several steps: (1) identifying the key words, (2) analyzing the key words in terms of denotative and connotative meanings, (3) rewriting the poetry in the form of prose with simpler language, and (4) completing it with writing all implicit meanings which are understood from the interpretation of culture, symbols and figurative language used in the poetry.

In line with the above steps, Wheeler (2013) stated about some characteristics of a good paraphrase. These characteristics are (1) it captures every single word in the original without leaving out any ideas, description or phrasing, (2) it doesn't merely repeat part of the original using the same word, (3) it might reorder the lines slightly to improve the ease of understanding, (4) it might be longer than the original passage, (5) it helps you understand a confusing passage, and (6) it helps you see multiple possible meanings in a passage you thought you understood on the first reading.

Based on the review of the theories related to poetry teaching, paraphrasing technique can resolve the source of problems. Sulaiman (2009) stated that language deviation in poetry can be solved by paraphrasing technique which is done by converting poetic language into appropriate prosaic language. Moreover, Khatib (2011) stated that students' motivation can be heightened if they have the chance to interpret the poem by themselves without depending on teacher's opinion or interpretation. This means that students' can be more actively involved in the class, especially because they need to interpret the English poem by themselves. Moreover, paraphrasing technique helps reader to understand the multiple meaning in it. This is in line with Nurkencana and Gunatama (1997) conclusion in their research that paraphrasing technique can improve students ability in understanding the layers of meaning in the poetry. Based on the previous explanation, then the two problems of the current classes i.e. language deviation in poetry and ineffective technique in involving students actively, can be predictively solved by paraphrasing technique.

Thus this article is written based on an action research which have been done in

2012/2013 to describe the students' responses toward the implementation of paraphrasing technique in English poetry classes.

METHOD

This research was done in academic year 2012/2013 in two poetry classes, they were D class and E class. This research was designed as an action research which was done in two cycles, each through the steps of planning, action, observation and reflection. In planning step the researcher prepared everything related to paraphrasing theories, data collection instruments they are questionnaire and lesson plans. The questionnaire used was a close type questionnaire with a previously determined points of statements. The statements of the questionnaire are about (1) paraphrasing technique gives chance to all students to be actively involved, (2) paraphrasing technique solves the problems caused by the language deviation in poetry, (3) paraphrasing technique increases students' sensitivity in interpreting culture, symbol and figurative language used in poetry, (4) paraphrasing technique gives more good than bad, and (5) besides improving the ability of understanding poetry, such as vocabulary and grammar. These statements were followed by 5 options that students should choose, they were **a** (absolutely agree), **b** (agree), **c** (doubtful), **d** (not really agree), **e** (totally disagree).

In action steps, paraphrasing technique was implemented in both classes. Each cycle was done in six sessions. At the end of each cycle, the students are asked to respond to the distributed questionnaire. Also, the instructional and learning processes were observed during the action step. To analyse the students' responses toward the implementation of paraphrasing technique, the result of questionnaire was then computed to see the percentages of the responses.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The Research Findings

The following is the percentage chart for the choosing **a** (absolutely agree) option in all items. This chart (Chart 1) describes the picture of students' positive agreement in D Class toward all statements in the questionnaire as above.

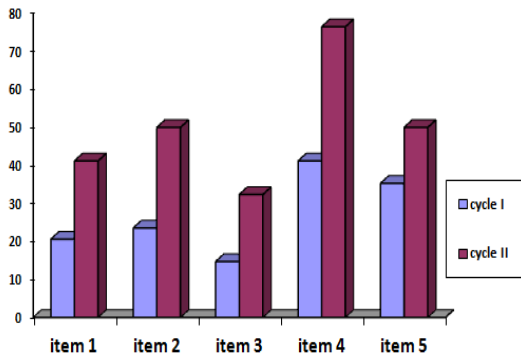


Chart 1. Percentage of choosing 'a' option (absolutely agree) in all items of questionnaires in both cycles

From D class' chart (Chart 1), it can be seen that in all items questionnaires (no 1-5), the percentage of choosing 'a' option, which means absolutely agree with the statements, increased from cycle I and cycle II. This means that students' impression is more positive in cycle II toward para-phrasing technique implementation.

In the E class' chart (Chart 2), similar finding was also showed. From the Chart 2, it can be seen that in E class, all items questionnaires (no 1-5) had in-creasing percentage of choosing 'a' (absolutely agree) option from cycle I to cycle II. Infact, the significant increasing percentage for item no 5 needs to be notice. Item no 5 states that

paraphras-ing technique improves not only the ability of understanding poetry but also other English language ability (such as vocabulary and gram-mar). Thus, the students finally realize that paraphrasing technique give benefits toward their language learning.

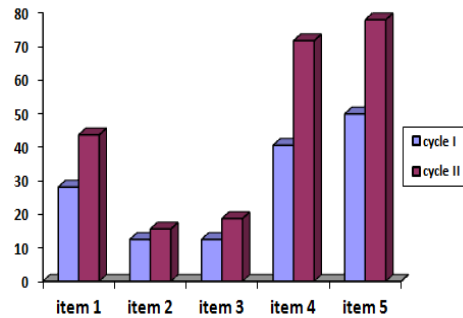


Chart 2. Percentage of choosing 'a' option (absolutely agree) in all items of questionnaires in both cycles

Unlike the option 'a' in cycle II, there was also decreasing number of students who chose 'c' and 'd' option. Apparently, this finding showed that the students' opinion (in both classes) toward paraphrasing technique implementation is positive, infact, even more positive at the end of cycle II.

Tabel 1. The Increasing Ability in Cycle II

Observed components	class D		class E	
	Cycle 1	cycle 2	cycle 1	cycle 2
Average score	73,26	80,44	71,56	80,31
Number of students who attained score higher than 70	21	27	19	25
Percentage of students attaining > 70	61,76%	79,41%	59,38%	78,12%

Beside, based on the result of study, paraphrasing technique helped students increase their ability in comprehending poem. Table 1 showing their increasing ability from two cycle

The above table (Table 1) can also be seen with the following chart (Chart 3). From the Table 1 and Chart 3, it is clear that both the average score and the number of students who attained higher than the standard score of 70 were increasing from cycle I to cycle II.

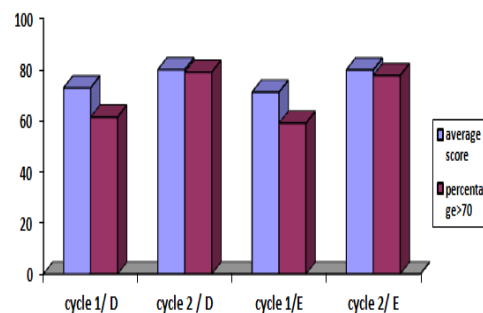


Chart 3. Percentage of Students Ability in Comprehending Poem

Discussion

One significant problem that is often perpetuated by English language teachers is the common practice of giving students topics to paraphrase of which they have very little background knowledge or interest. If the topics are abstract or unrelated to their current condition, the whole idea of paraphrasing may become even more difficult. In line with this Randolph (2014) states that the secret to successful paraphrasing lies in how it is taught and the material used to help make the learning experience a positive and productive one.

Furthermore, we must always keep in mind that we are still at the stage where we help the students to develop these skills. We are giving them maps and tools to work with, and if these maps and tools are too difficult and unappealing, then the whole experience will be deemed unhelpful and pointless. Therefore the poems to be paraphrased should be selected based on students' language level and topics familiarity. The more familiar they are with the topic the better their learning experience is.

In this research, the poems are selected based on these two aspects: the students' language level and the topic familiarity.

In cycle I, all preparation including research instruments such as test, assessment rubric, questionnaire and lesson plans had been prepared in the planning step. This cycle was conducted in 6 sessions. Each session lasted for 100 minutes. In each session one poem was paraphrased by the students. This means in the entire cycle I, there were 6 poems being paraphrased, they were *The Eagle*, *The Road not Taken*, *Bereft*, *The Man He Killed*, *Richard Cory*, and *Star*. The same treatment was done to both classes (D and E class). And finally, at the 7th session the test was administered and the questionnaires were distributed to the students.

In action step, the lecturer taught as it had been planned and followed the procedure of paraphrasing technique. First, the lecturer opened the class, and asked some students to read the poem that was going to be paraphrased. And then, each student was assigned to identify the keywords in the poem individually. Then, the students analyzed the denotatif and connotative meaning of the keywords found. Further, the students rewrite the poem in prose form by replacing difficult word or phrase into easy-to-understand words or phrase or in other word the

students simplified the language. The students also asked to interpret the cultural values, symbols and figurative language used. The same procedures were similarly administered in both classes (D and E class)

In both classes students' activities and responses were not far different. During the teaching and learning class, each student was actively involved. To ensure all students concentrate on their work, the lecturer reminded the students to turn off the mobile phone and to work diligently. All students need to submit their work at the end of the sessions. The positive thing during the administration of paraphrasing technique was the students tend to use their monolingual (English to English) paper-dictionary rather than their bilingual (English to *Bahasa*) electronic translator. This phenomenon was not surprising, considering paraphrasing technique demands the students to interpret intended meaning from multi-interpreted words used in the poetry. Language poetry often contains of idiom, symbols derived from English proverbs, and for this, the students had better worked with monolingual paper-dictionary rather than bilingual electronic translator which very often gives non-contextual meaning.

Dictionary gives abundance benefits compare to electronic translator many students like to use. Because of modern technology that offers fast searching result, students tend to use electronic translator, but these modern devices can not cope with colloquial idioms, multi-interpreted meaning of words, and proverbs which are derived from particular culture of target language. Meanwhile, monolingual (English to English) dictionary gives benefits such as effective English vocabulary building, word meaning searching, idioms, proverb, connotative meaning, and various sentence examples that clarify meaning in several contexts (Kernerman, 1996). The only disadvantage of using paper dictionary (either bilingual or monolingual) is that it is time consuming; however, if we consider how good it can enhance students' words-building, then it worth doing. Therefore, the use of dictionary, compare to electronic translator, gives more benefits.

Another positive phenomenon during the learning process was all student worked actively in re-writing English poem into prose form with simpler language. By being active, the students did not only come to a deeper understanding of the poem paraphrased, but also that their

motivation and enthusiasm were heightened. During the activity of re-writing the poetry they learned many things, especially being sensitive about cultural aspect and figurative language used.

After six sessions of treatments (action step), a test (test I) was administered. The test asked the students to paraphrase an English poetry as they had done during the action step, and explained their interpretation. However, the improvement had not achieved the expected standard which was to achieve class' average score 80 and to have 75% of students achieved 70. Thus it continued to the cycle II

Based on the result of observation, this was possibly because the individual paraphrasing activity was not very effective. Some students were seen confused and tried to ask other students who couldn't give effective help since they were also working on their on papers. The low achiever students struggled hardly to finish their papers, and this resulted to their submitting unsatisfying papers.

Then, some modifications were determined to solve this possible cause of failure. *First*, the students should work in pair. And the pair would be chosen by the teacher to have a beneficial combination by pairing high achiever with low achiever students. By this way it was expected that low achiever students could learn from high achiever students. In relation to pair working, Kagan (1998) stated that work in pair allows students to improve thinking skills, communication skills and to share information. This modification was determined to give chance for all students to share ideas and information so that, by the time it improves their learning. *Second*, in cycle II, some guided questions needed to be designed to generate student's critical thinking about the discussed poetry. This is in line with Arends (2001) who stated that in understanding a text, teacher may help his students by giving the series guided questions before reading the text. In this context, guided questions mean questions that give clues for students to interpret the poetry's meaning. This is important to be done since in cycle I, it was found that students were still not enough critical in interpreting the meaning, so several guided questions may help them to see what need to see, or to direct them in interpreting the poetry's meaning.

In the cycle II, the two modifications mentioned previously were conducted. This cycle II was also done in six sessions, each with

one poem to be paraphrased. The poems were *Living in Sin*, *The hound*, *Stopping By The Snowy Evening*, *The Chimney Sweeper*, *White Rose* dan *Weep You No More Sad Fountain*. The same poems and design of treatments were used similarly in both classes.

Randolp (2014) states that poetry is often viewed as difficult and abstract, but there are poems that are personal, concrete, and easily speak to the reader. Therefore in both cycles the used poems are challenging, but personal and ende-aring.

Based on the result of observation, the quality of students' learning enthusiasm was significantly improved. Students were more enthusiastic working with their pair compare to working individually. Not only being more enthusiastic, students also worked faster. This was because they worked together, and each other contributed toward the finishing task, so all things were discussed, thought and done together. Dornyei (2001) suggests that learners have to be enthusiastic to achieve the goal of learning a foreign language, to success in mastery a target language well. Therefore, to have students' enthusiasm increased is a good sign of their successful learning.

Beside that, the guided questions also contributed to their fast working, it helped them to think more critically and specifically. The guided questions were designed not only to notice the significant word-using but also to let the students notice the language structure used that were often a key to understanding English poetry. This modification was suspected to be the caused why the percentage of choosing 'a' option for the questionnaire item #5 was increased significantly.

After the cycle II was done, the second test (test II) was administered. The result of the test was again showed students improvement in the ability of understanding poetry, infact, it successfully went beyond the expected standard. This means that the research could be stopped since it already achieved the standard score.

Generally the students had positive impression toward the implementation of praphrasing technique. This can be seen from the high percentage of the number of students who choose option **a** and **b** compare to the ones who chose option **c**, **d** and **e**. However, what should be highlighted here is the paraphrasing technique should be modified in some ways. *First*, the students should be paired up. *Second*, some

provided guided questions is necessary to help students to see what to see or to ease them interpret meaning.

In relation to the finding that comprehending poem ability is increasing by the use of paraphrasing technique, some research in neuroscience (Damasio, 1994; Davidson & Begley, 2013; Jensen, 2008; LeDoux, 1996; Medina, 2009) supports the use paraphrasing poetry for learning benefit. They claim based on three significant factors that relate to learning: emotions, senses and personal involvement or ownership.

Although emotions are often excluded in the learning environment, the neuroscience community urges us to incorporate them in every lesson and in every activity. are central to the functions of the brain and to the life of the mind” (Davidson & Begley, 2013). Long time brain-based learning advocate, Jensen (2008:90), finds emotions to be a crucial element in education. “Emotions are a critical source of information for learning, and they ought to be used to inform us rather than considered something to subdue and ignore”

The senses are also a potent tool for learning. According to Medina (2009: 219) “Our senses evolved to work together—vision influencing hearing, for example—which means that we learn best if we stimulate several senses at once”. Any time we become personally involved in learning and take ownership in the process, we are usually much more engaged, and, at the same time, successful. Willis (2006) in her studies, found that one of the best ways to get students to connect with both the learning process and the material is to get the students to “personalize” it.

Thus, the used of paraphrasing poetry is not only beneficial for comprehending poetry but also for activate learning in general

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CONCLUSION

Beside improving students’ ability in understanding English poetry, the implementation of paraphrasing technique is responded positively especially toward five statements related to paraphrasing technique. The statements are that (1) paraphrasing technique can involve students actively; (2) paraphrasing technique solves the problems caused by the language deviation in poetry; (3) paraphrasing technique increases students’ sensitivity in interpreting culture, symbol and figurative language used in poetry; (4) paraphrasing technique gives more good than bad; and (5) improving the ability of understanding poetry, such as vocabulary and grammar.

Concerning the result of the research, some suggestions can be given to several people. For the poetry lecturer, it is suggested to use paraphrasing technique and consider pair working in doing the paraphrase. Besides, the lecturer needs to provide some guided questions prior paraphrasing activity that may generate students’ critical thinking to-ward important aspects in the poetry. Also, suggestion can be given to the EED students who learn English poetry, that they need not to be too depended on electronic translator. Electronic translator, eventhough it gives fast serching result, but it tend to make the students lazy. The process of learning language is not improved as good as when students used dictionary. Therefore, students need to maximize the use of dictionary, especially monolingual (English to English) dictionary. It helps students not only in improving their poetry understanding but also vocabulary knowledge, colloquial language, and idioms, which can’t be offered by electronic translator.

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