

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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This chapter will deal with some topics (1) Background of the Study (2) Statement of the Problem (3) Objective of the Study (4) Significance of the Study (5) Scope and Limitation of the Study (6) Theoretical Framework (7) Research Methods and (8) Organization of the Study

1.1 Background of the Study

In the past five years, Indonesia has published and applied the 1994 Curriculum. This curriculum states that the main objective of teaching learning English as the first foreign language in Indonesia is to provide SMU graduates with four skills of language namely, reading, listening, speaking and writing. From all the skills above, reading skill is emphasized.

Reading as one of the four language skills has the most important role in education. B.J.Moore (1984:1) supports it by stating that "reading may be described as 'getting meaning' from written text." Thus, it gives us proof that reading competence is very important because the students can absorb many kinds of knowledge from reading material written in English. Webster (1982:164) states that reading is a factor of communication. The action of statement above is to act the

readers as people by sharing their interests, activities, fun and problems. Thus, in this study, the writer tries to make the students to be active during the lesson.

One of the reading materials is literary works such as novels, short stories, drama and poems. Thomas Gwin (1990:10) and Nursel Icoz (1992:10) state that literary works can arise students' interest in learning second language and provide them with meaningful input of a 'good writing'. Gwin (1990:10) gives some summarization of the value of literary work:

1. Literature provides students with interesting and meaningful input in the written mode. Interest is the primary goal of literature.
2. It provides a focus for meaningful output through writing and discussion.
3. It provides realistic experience for the type of reading, and students will encounter in real life situations.

In this study, the writer chooses poems instead of prose that is used by Thomas Gwin because poem contains some aspects such as denotation, connotation, diction and theme as its underlying idea. Ernest (1945:17) adds the statement above by stating that poetry is any form of composition with rhyme. In fact, beyond that, poem carries many values such as emotion, imagination, idea, truth, beauty, power, rhythm and pleasure. In here, we can appreciate and enjoy what poets have made of the emotions we feel. All the characteristics of a poem above can be a material for learning reading.

The writer chooses Thomas Gwin's technique because his technique is simple and easy to do. His method that includes debate and writing assignment gives more values in encouraging the students to learn poems. Bartholomae and

Petrosky (1987:iii) state that the crucial issue in learning to read is what the students can learn to do with what they read. They also suggest to use the reading text that can invite students to be active and become critical readers based on their experiences. In their book, Bartholomae and Petrosky (1987:4) also support the use of writing assignment by stating "Readers learn to put things together by writing. It requires that you work on what you have read, and that work best takes shape when you sit down to write. Writing also gives you a way of going back to work on the text of your own reading." On the basis of the statement above, exercises such as debate and writing assignment are applicable activities in learning poems in the classroom. Thomas Gwin himself is currently teaching EAP at the King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. His article is based on his teaching experiences at the City University of New York and at the American Language Institute of New York University.

The writer selects Emily Dickinson poems because she ranks as one of the world's most talented poets. She wrote many poems about live, death, love, and nature. Almost all of her poetry remained unpublished until after her death. Most of the themes of her poems are based on her life journey.

In this study, the writer tries to select Emily Dickinson's poems that are related to students' experience to encourage them to participate actively in the classroom. By being active in the classroom, students can arise their self-confidence in understanding the poems. Nursel Icoz (1992:10) supports the statement above by stating that since the students would not be able to relate their

experiences and emotions that appear in the text, they would not be inspired to participate in any discussion that is initiated.

The writer chooses "Success is Counted Sweetest" because its theme is related to the student's experience. Success is considered as a sweet thing when the students are successful in their examination by studying hard, and "There is no Frigate like a Book" because its theme gives a high value of a book as a tool for traveling around the world to seek a lot of experience. Herlina (1996:3) mentions that the ability to state theme is a test of our understanding of a story. Thus, this study also discusses the theme beside the other aspects of poem.

In Thomas Gwin's technique, the steps of its activities are similar to the steps of teaching reading that is pre reading activities, whilst reading activities, and post reading activities. Barnett (1989:114) states that "Pre reading activities involve students in reading a particular text, elicit or provide appropriate background knowledge." Therefore, the existence of pre reading activities is crucial. The purpose of pre reading activities is to arise students' interest and focus their attention to the poem. In pre reading, students are expected to find a certain content from the source, title, or subject matter of a text. In here, content means: information they need, what the author has to say, how it applies to them. Whilst reading exercises help students in developing their reading strategies. In here, we can ask questions, offer hints to aid comprehension, and help the students to talk about what he or she is thinking. Barnett (1989:125) suggests some activities that are applicable for students such as: guessing word meanings through context, acquiring vocabularies, reading to learn new information, and using dictionaries

efficiently. In this study, whilst reading activities have objective to help the students to find the explicit and implicit meaning of the words in the poems. After reading, teacher and students discuss how well the text was comprehended. Evaluating what they read, educated readers can justify their opinion. Post reading exercises check students' comprehension, and then, lead students to a deeper analysis of the text. Thus, in this study, post reading activities help the students to understand the whole message of the poem, and help the students to conclude the real value of the poem.

Therefore, this is the main reason why the writer chooses the main topic of her thesis is **Thomas Gwin's Technique as a Means of Teaching Reading using Poems to the Students of DI Program of "Prisma Profesional" Surabaya.**

1.2 Statement of the Problem

On the basis of the background of the study above, the writer would like to suggest a major question related with the problem. She adapts Thomas Gwin's technique as a new technique in learning reading using poems that its themes related to the students' real experience. The major question is: "What is the procedure of teaching reading through Thomas Gwin's technique using poems? The major question above appeals some minor questions that are:

- 1) How do students learn to read through Thomas Gwin's technique using poems?
- 2) What are types of activities emerging during the debate?
- 3) What are the aspects of poems being learnt during the lesson?

1.3 Objective of the Study

From the statement of the problem above, the writer has hypothesis that the teaching reading technique proposed by Thomas Gwin can be applied in learning reading using poems to gain the students' reading skills. Therefore, the main objectives of this study are:

1. to find out how the students learn to read through Thomas Gwin's technique.
2. to find out what types of activities which are emerging during the debate.
3. to find out what the aspects of poems being learnt during the lesson.

1.4 Significance of the Study

1. This study encourages the students to learn new reading technique as proposed by Thomas Gwin.
2. This study gives contribution to the English learners to find a selective method in learning literary works.
3. This study gives contribution to the English teacher to find an alternative technique in teaching reading using poem as reading material.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This research is applied to the students of DI Program of "Prisma Profesional" at "Certificate Professional English" class. The writer takes two meetings, and each meeting is within ninety minutes. The writer uses Thomas Gwin technique in learning reading using two poems of Emily Dickinson namely, "Success is Counted Sweetest" and "There is no Frigate like a Book."

1.6 Theoretical Framework

A. The Principles of Learning to Read

According to David L. Shepherd in his book entitled **Comprehensive High School Reading Method** (Tio, Suggested Reading Materials for SMA A-4, 1988: 20-21), there are several principles of learning to read which influence the students' activities in classroom. This principles will be explained in Chapter II

B. Thomas Gwin's Procedures

Thomas Gwin in his article **Language Skills Through Literature** (English Teaching Forum, 1990:10) creates some steps in learning prose which are similar to the steps of reading: pre reading, whilst reading and post reading. The suggested steps for pre reading activities are:

- 1) Showing the class some pictures in order to elicit reactions of the students.
- 2) Giving writing assignments before the students read. Students are offered the chance to read their experience to the class.
- 3) Writing the title of the story on the board, and asking the class to speculate on what the story will be about.

In whilst reading, some activities that are applied are:

- 1) Giving the chances for the students to read the story at home, and reminding them to read for overall comprehension.
- 2) Handing out copies of a list of questions aimed at helping to focus on critical aspects of the piece.

- 3) Setting some notes in a form of double-entry format; a page of journal is divided by drawing a line down the centre. On the left side, the students write words they want to ask about or any other questions they have, and on the right side, the students write the answers.
- 4) Grouping the students in order to resolve any points of difference.
- 5) Making a debate with a question focused on the central theme of the story.

In post reading, the suggested activities are:

- 1) Creating a roleplay of a particular section of the story.
- 2) Giving the students exercises to make writing assignment such as the critical evaluation essay (their personal reactions and opinions about the story with reasons and examples from the text), analysis of a character, plot summaries, and commenting on some aspects of the theme.

C. The Writer's Procedures

In her study, the writer tries to apply some steps of the teaching reading procedure proposed by Thomas Gwin. Instead of using prose, the writer selects two of Emily Dickinson poems as her reading materials. The chosen pre reading activities are:

- 1) Showing the class some pictures of handshake and people who read books to elicit the reaction of the students.
- 2) Writing the title of the poems: "Success is Counted Sweetest" and "There is no Frigate like a Book."

After the teacher reads the poems, two of the students try to read it.

In whilst reading, the activities that are applied are:

- 1) Giving some explanation about the aspects of poem which includes in two of Emily Dickinson poems such as diction, denotation and connotation.
- 2) Giving some questions which lead to the theme of the poems, and the students write their questions-answers on their notebooks.
- 3) Asking the students to make a set of notes on vocabularies. There will be two columns on the notebook: On the left side, the students write the questions and difficult vocabularies, and the right side is for the answers and the meaning of the difficult words.
- 4) Asking the students to work in group in order to help each other in finding the right answers. Then, they will make a debate to defend their point of view.

The activity in post reading is the students make writing assignments about their real experience based on the theme of the poems.

D. The Importance of Poem

There are some statements which regard the poem as one of the art which has special power, and has beyond meaning. Perrine (1969:3) states the importance of poem that will be explained in chapter II.

1.7 Research Methods

This study is a participant observational study, and it takes two meetings. Each meeting is within ninety minutes. The writer gathers the data by viewing, listening, and recording the subjects in the classroom, so she gets input of 'naturally

occurring ' context. The writer applies her materials at the classroom, and then, she records the conversation of the lessons and ask the student's opinion about this technique. In this study, the writer adapts Mehan's technique in interpreting the students' talk in three columns which are Q-A-E (Question-Answer-Evaluation) columns. Q-A-Q-A is introduced as chaining procedure found in ordinary 'lessons' classroom conversation, and E is an additional element to evaluate pupil's behaviour. Thus, the chaining procedure becomes Q-A-E-Q-A-E. In transcribing the talk, a convention of the transcription symbols is determined as introduced by Heritage (1984).

To complete this study, the writer contributes much input from textbooks, thesis, journal, the articles of "Forum" magazines and lesson plans.

1.3 Organization of the Study

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter I is devoted to the Introduction. Chapter II is Review of Related Literature, and chapter III will present Research Methods. Chapter IV is The Application of Thomas Gwin's Technique in the Classroom, and chapter V presents Conclusion and Suggestions.