



The Enlightenment of Literature Instruction at Language Education Program¹⁾

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Abstract: It is pointed out that the teaching of literature, especially literary appreciation is relatively low. There is an indication that teachers make efforts to avoid teaching literature. The indication causes students have less interest in literary works. They, as Taufik Ismail remarks, are literature hazy, and so do the teachers. The phenomenon emerges to the surface due to the lack of teachers' knowledge about literature teaching methodology. This paper highlights the syndrome of literature hazy and strategies in enlightening the teaching of literature at language education program.

Key words: literature instruction, appreciation, literary work, literature hazy, enlightenment.

Literature is one of the subjects taught in English Department besides language skills and linguistics. The teaching English language cannot be separated from English literature instruction. English literature can enhance students' understanding of English language since it provides the students with genres of vocabulary and syntax. The students will have better understanding of the English language (Munro cited by Zughouli, 1986:14). Therefore, John (1986:18) insists that literature courses must have a much greater portion than language/linguistics ones because the students' competence cannot be enhanced by many language and linguistics courses.

However, literature instruction for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students is neglected in English Department (Zughouli, 1986; Rosenblatt, 1991). It is assumed that literature is unable to contribute to students' language skills. It is also stated that literature is only a subject of recitation and of enjoyment. The teaching merely concentrates on language and linguistics, whereas in fact literature will be meaningful and

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purposeful only if it is taught side by side with language and linguistics. Widdowson (1985) proposes, "As far as English literature teaching overseas is concerned, therefore, it can only have meaning and purpose if it is integrated with the teaching of English language."

In addition to having no contribution to students' language skills, a literature course only functions for enjoyment. These two things constitute factors that make literature instruction ignored in English Departments. The teaching of literature has been presented in classroom in a conventional way due to the lack of literature knowledge and the strategy of teaching. Rudy (2000:2) observes that the teacher only asks students to read, answer available questions or questions created by the teacher, and conclude or retell a literary work. Meanwhile, Beach and Marshall (1991:219) set forth that in most literature classrooms students are provided with questions to identify characters, settings, or theme. Such questions are to determine whether the literary work has been read.

From these perspectives, this paper would like to identify and to depict the syndrome of literature hazy. Besides, it elaborates some strategies of literature teaching enlightenment at language education program.

LITERATURE HAZY SYNDROME

As previously stated, as a subject matter, literature has no contribution to promote students' language skills. It seems that the four language skills are merely promoted by language teaching. That's why a little portion is given to literature teaching at language education program.

The more important thing is that most students have no interest in studying literature. They even hate the subject matter. A student wrote something on his answer sheet in a national examination: "You have murdered *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. What more do you want? My blood? It is exemplified by Purves, et al. (1990:174). Another example that they cite is that in a school, students are asked twenty-three questions on *Macbeth* in fifteen minutes, questions like *What does this word mean? What does the next line mean?* After class, she was asked whether the students like the play. She responded, "*I don't know I haven't time.*"

Those two examples indicate that literature becomes a boring basic competence. If recitation and term papers about literature are the only things to be taken into consideration by a curriculum, students may learn to dislike literature. Ultimately, it is reasonable that the students are hazy to literature. They suffer from literature hazy syndrome. This phenomenon is incompatible with the existence of literature in the curriculum. According to Purves, et al. (1990:174):

Literature and the arts exist in the curriculum as a means for students to learn to express their emotions, their thoughts, and

their imaginations as they enter into the experiences of the works they read and transliterate those experiences into film, talk, silence, writing, drama, pictures, or the like.

The statement pinpoints that not only does literature, but also the arts can free the imagination and help people order their worlds. In other words, there is no an imprisoned society with the freedom of imagination and personal order.

The hazy of literature, as observed by Rudy (2001), can be proved by examining the literature instruction so far. Teacher adopted *effeferent* stance as the perspective to conduct teaching-learning activities. This is in contradiction with the assertion of Rosenblatt (1978) about teaching literature correctly that it has to emphasize the aesthetic stance. It means that not only can the students identify the intrinsic value as setting, characters and characterization, plot, and theme; they also have to identify the extrinsic value such as the intent of the writer, symbolism, and style.

Above all, who is liable to the literature hazy syndrome? To whom will we ask for the responsibility? A sharp accusation is addressed against teachers that they cause students have the syndrome (Rudy, 2005a:2). She, further, depicts that the term of literature hazy is limited to student's reading interest and literary work appreciation. In connection with this, as the central actors, teachers have no interest to the literary works, avoid to teach literature, are not professional, and many others. These support some experts' point of view that teachers lack of literature knowledge and literature instruction strategy (Alwasilah, 1994; Mansour, 1999; Wei, 1999).

THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF LITERATURE INSTRUCTION

Aesthetic perspective and Bloom taxonomy domains are two essential things to be adopted to make literature instruction reach good qualification. The inquiry conducted by Rudy (2005b) indicates why literature instruction must adopt such two things in order to be more qualified. First of all, when aesthetic stance is ignored, the nurturing effect of such teaching learning activity is that the students will suffer from literature hazy as they can merely identify the intrinsic value.

Secondly, the three domains of Bloom taxonomy are covered in the qualified literature teaching if the strategy of literary appreciation applied is a reader response. The reader response consists of seven strategies. Cognitive domain includes four strategies: describing, conceiving, explaining, and interpreting. Three strategies are covered in affective domain: engaging, connecting and judging. To complete the qualification, Rudy adds visual symbols in responding literary works and the symbols fulfill psychomotor domain. For the sake of literature

teaching enlightenment, this paper depicts those two essential things further.

Aesthetic Literature Instruction

In relation to the enlightenment, education institutions such as IKIP, STKIP, FKIP, and FPBS produce language teachers. Such institutions have produced alumni that work or have position in several divisions of government and private companies. Unfortunately, Rudy (2005a) examines that the institutions have not been maximum in producing language and arts educators. There is an empirical fact that theories of language and literature dominates the teaching material so that the perspective teachers have theoretical experience more than practical one in appreciating literature.

Based on the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), the purpose of literature teaching is to sharpen students' moral. It is impossible to expect the moral to be promoted since the teaching has adopted cognitive aspects. The teaching of literature so far sharpens the cognition but it blunts other aspects such as affective and psychomotor ones. It emphasizes on *effert* stance; it means that only intrinsic value is put forward.

In order to achieve the curriculum target, perspective teachers of all education institutions must be supplied with the correct and the aesthetic literature teaching. In relation to the previous opinions of some experts about literature teachers, the following are some provisions that the prospective teachers have to know, that is reader response strategy, visual symbols response, and creating guide questions for primary and secondary school students.

Reader Response Strategy (RRS)

Beach and Marshall (1990:137) propose seven strategies of response that is describing, conceiving, engaging, connecting, judging explaining, and interpreting. When applying engaging strategy, readers are engaged with a text when they are articulating their emotional reaction or level of involvement with the text. Next, the readers describe a text when they restate the information that is provided in the text. When readers conceive of the characters or settings in a text, they are moving beyond a description of information of a statement about its meaning. When explaining character's actions, readers are drawing on their conceptions of characters' traits, beliefs, or goals to infer a reason for that character's action. The readers may often connect their own autobiographical or prior reading experiences with the text. Penzenstadler (1999) reminds that a teacher is able to facilitate students to connect what

they read with their world with everything used as learning media (<http://www.ade.org/ade/bulletin/n123/123036.htm>).

Furthermore, interpreting a text involves defining the symbolic meaning, theme, or point of specific events in the text. Making interpretations usually discusses specific events in the text on what the text "says." According to Miall and Kuiken (1994) students are empowered as active producers of meanings in literature texts. Their reading and understanding of the texts become possible and expected as they create their interpretation (When judging a text, readers are pulling back from it to make evaluative statements about its characters or literary quality). They may argue the behavior of the characters.

There are many techniques and methods people have ever applied in responding literary work. The RRS has been an alternative technique to express students' thought and feeling toward the literary work read. Beach (1993:15) states that the RRS emerges in the surface as a reaction to new criticism that proposes structuralism (text-oriented). The popularity of the strategy according to Hong (1997) represents "a result of a revaluation and reclaiming of sorts." In 1970s and 1980s, natural literature reading theories attracted academic's interest because they focus on the role of the reader and the process of reading (<http://eduweb.nie.edu.sg/REACTOId/1997/1/6.htm>). The strategy emerges, as people do not feel satisfied in appreciating literary work by applying structuralism approach. Nevertheless, the existence of the approach is still necessitated in the RRS. In other words, structuralism approach represents a part of the RRS that is describing strategy.

Visual Symbols Response

To enrich students' interpretation toward literary work, teacher has to teach them how to respond the literary work nonverbally. Nonverbal response uses visual symbols that consist of four dimensions: graphic, illustration, film, and performance arts (Purves, et al., 1990:88). Every visual dimension concludes some forms as shown in the following table.

Table 1. Four Dimensions of Visual Symbols

Graphics		Illustration	
Socio-gram	Story maps	Posters	
Charts and Graphs		Photographs	
Diagram	Cartoons	Collages	
Calligraphy			
Scripted stories		Tableaux	
Animation		Dance	
Special effects	Filming...	...Mime	Music
Film/Video		Performance Arts	

Source: Purves, Allan, et. Al. 1990. *How Porcupine Makes Love II: Teaching A Response -Centered Literature Curriculum*

Many researchers have done experiments in literature circle to know the effectiveness of the symbols (sociogram, story map, picture, and tableau). Students draw a sociogram to identify the relationship between characters after reading *Romeo and Juliet*. In doing the sociogram, a student will need to think about the central characters and their alignments with each other and with minor characters. When they read a story about a character's travels (e.g. *Gulliver's*, *Huckle Berry Finn*), a story map is simply illustration of the terrain of the story. It is able to enhance students' understanding of the twists and turns of complex plots.

Meanwhile, a picture can be created when the description of the character is very complex. After reading *Harrison Bergeron*, students can imagine how the character looks like by drawing the picture of him by the help of the text that describes the character's performance.

As a performance art, tableau is a "still picture" of a scene or moment from a story that is recreated by students using gesture and expression. It can be done in small groups by deciding what scene they would like to create. Other students try to guess what scene from the story being depicted.

Similar to these visual symbols, Miall (1996) posed that oral reports, poster-type displays, dramatic presentations, or written reports are several possible ways that can be implemented after students completed an important sequence of work (<http://www.ualberta.ca/%7Edmiall/reading/index.htm>). Many books that include visual symbols as literature teaching media have been produced, among others: Collic and Slater, 1987; Carter and Long, 1992; McRae, 1999.

Creating Guide Questions

As short stories used as teaching media in literature circle, it is crucial to take into account students and response strategy that is suitable for them. In order to appreciate a story as a genre of literature, students have to read and understand the content of the story. Teacher must create questions, which are developed from RRS. The questions that contain seven response strategies guide the students to express their feelings and thoughts. It is a good idea that the perspective teachers know how to create the questions before they teach at schools. The guide questions facilitate students to appreciate literary works. They enable to write and speak about the works.

The guide questions are necessitated and useful for students in all levels of education. Nevertheless, university students must be given different treatment. The questions have to be simple. It is suggested that they initially appreciate a story by the help of the guide questions in detail. They are eventually provided by simple questions, which are

arranged based on reader response. These are the examples of the questions:

1. Can you tell about the intrinsic and extrinsic elements of the story: the setting, the character and characterization, the plot, the point of view, the style, the intent of the author? Please tell them briefly. (**Describing strategy**)
2. After reading the story, can you engage your thought and feeling to the characters'? What do you feel and think of the character? As if you were the character, would you do as the character has done? (**Engaging strategy**)
3. Do you have the same experience with the character? Can you also connect the story to the story from the book you ever read or the film that you ever watched? (**Connecting strategy**)
4. What do you think of the story, is it interesting? Is the story valuable? What can you get from the story? (**Judging strategy**)
5. What is the theme of the story? What word is important and why is it important? (**Interpreting strategy**)
6. Why does the character do the action? (**Explaining strategy**)
7. Do you agree with the character's action? (**Conceiving strategy**)

Teachers and perspective teachers have to construct the guide questions about the story the students read. The construction of questions indicates that the teachers are creative based on CBC.

CONCLUSION

A good literature teaching adopts and emphasizes aesthetic stance. The aesthetic literature teaching contains not only intrinsic and extrinsic value of a literary work but also other strategies of response toward the literary work that is reader response strategy and visual symbols response. It is a demand of CBC that literature teaching must sharpen as well as smarten students' moral. That is why the literature instruction at language education program and other education levels has to adopt the aesthetic stance. It contributes to the development of cognition, affection, and psychomotor.

Such literature instruction can be good therapy to cure literature hazy syndrome. It is time to enlighten the teaching of literature in all levels of education especially for prospective teachers at language education program.

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