

## Using English Poetry to Enhance Students' Ability in Recognizing Word Categories

### การใช้บทกวีภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อส่งเสริมความสามารถของนิสิตในการจดจำชนิดของคำ

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#### บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีจุดมุ่งหมายเพื่อ 1) ศึกษาความสามารถในการจดจำชนิดของคำก่อนและหลังเรียนบทกวีภาษาอังกฤษ และ 2) เพื่อศึกษาความพึงพอใจของนิสิตต่อการเรียนบทกวีภาษาอังกฤษในชั้นเรียน กลุ่มตัวอย่างที่ใช้ในการศึกษาครั้งนี้เป็นนิสิต ชั้นปีที่ 3 จำนวน 41 คน สาขาศิลปะและการออกแบบ คณะสถาปัตยกรรมศาสตร์และศิลปกรรมศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยพะเยา ได้มาจากการสุ่มตัวอย่างแบบเจาะจง เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการศึกษา คือ แบบทดสอบก่อนเรียนและหลังเรียน เรื่องชนิดของคำ แบบฝึกหัด แผนการสอน และแบบสอบถามความพึงพอใจต่อการเรียนชนิดของคำผ่านบทกวีภาษาอังกฤษ สถิติที่ใช้ในการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลคือ ค่าเฉลี่ย และส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน โดยการทดสอบ T-test ผลการวิจัยพบว่า

1) นิสิตที่เรียนโดยใช้ร้อยกรองภาษาอังกฤษมีความสามารถในการจำชนิดของคำสูงกว่าก่อนเรียนอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ 0.05 และ 2) จากการสอบถามความพึงพอใจของนิสิตที่มีต่อการเรียนชนิดของคำผ่านบทกวีภาษาอังกฤษ นิสิตมีความพึงพอใจอยู่ในภาพรวมระดับดีมาก

**คำสำคัญ** : บทกวีภาษาอังกฤษ, การจดจำ, ชนิดของคำ

#### Abstract

This research aimed to 1) study students' ability in recognizing word categories before and after studying English poetry and 2) study the satisfaction of students toward studying English poetry in the classroom. The participants of this study were 41-third-year-students majoring in Art and Design, School of Architecture and Fine Arts, University of Phayao selected from purposive sampling method. The instruments were pre-test and post-test of word categories, exercises, lesson plans, and a satisfaction questionnaire toward studying English poetry. The data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and T-test. The study found that

1) the students' recognizing ability who studied word categories from English poetry was higher than before with the statistical significance level at 0.05 and 2) the students' satisfaction in studying from English poetry was very high.

**Keywords** : English Poetry, Recognizing, Word Categories

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## Introduction

In the present time, English has been used worldwide as an international language, and it becomes one of the world's top languages that people used as a medium for communication. People use English for work and study, and they take it as a foreign language or a second language around the globe (Ahmad, 2016 : 123).

However, there are various styles of teaching and learning English nowadays. Learning English in the language classroom consists of many procedures such as writing stories or essays, practicing through listening, speaking with friends, and reading from texts. In Thailand, though the learners are embedded learning English in various ways such as learning linguistics, literature or even grammatical structure, the English proficiency of the students is still in the low level (Chawwang, 2008 : 5). Due to the problems of studying English, many educators use many teaching procedures to strengthen students in learning a foreign language. Moreover, using the poems as a medium for teaching is one popular strategy among the language teachers that helps promote students in enriching them to study languages. Additionally, a poem is a short piece of writing if comparing to other kind of literature like a prose therefore it attracts to students' reading more than spending time with other kind of literature. Furthermore, McCall (2004) describes that in poetry could grasp students' attention due to the length of the sentences and ballad because the structure of phrases and short sentences help students understand the text easily. Therefore, it suits for students to learn language more effectively. Likewise, Shettel (2011 : 13) illustrates the use of poetry as it is "helping teachers understand and embrace the use of poetry in the classroom".

The importance of using poetry in education is that the poetry consists of ideas and feelings. In addition to the language used, the poet could show passion or even anger through the poems. In Thailand, teaching through poetry is not new for young Thai students especially in university education. In teaching English as a foreign language classroom, poetry has been used in teaching in terms of developing language acquisition, a literacy skill, and linguistics knowledge. Nonetheless, poetry is also a power material for students to learn more about poetic concepts and cultural assumptions. In terms of studying poems, it increases the students' knowledge of the English language. The main reason why poetry should be taught at the English curriculum is that students can increase their own vocabulary more effectively. The purpose of using poetry in the English classrooms is to create a learning environment by increasing vocabulary, building listening comprehension, enhancing speaking, reading, and writing skills and expanding cultural knowledge (Hijazi & Al-natour, 2012 : 295). Further, poetry always promotes literary, and it helps students to draw an image of everything in mind which the readers can feel, explain and talk about. Thus, poetry is musical and rhythmic, so it catches the readers' attention (Mittal, 2014 : 21).

## Poetry in the Language Classroom

The use of poetry becomes a tool of teaching in the language classroom, particularly, in the English language. Firstly, Yusef, Haj, Kundu & Satpathy (2016 : 7) reveals that learning from poetry can

develop language skills and literacy. In addition to this, the teacher as the main instructor could help students' learning by demonstrating simple poems which help students understand the poems clearly. Thus, poems especially modern poems are also good materials for the young learners because they are obviously direct to students' age and interest so the poem used in class should be relevant to students' environment. Moreover, Padak (2001) states that poetry can be a useful material for teaching to help promote students in the language classroom. Furthermore, Ahmad (2014 : 123) mentions that poetry can offer a wide range of language learning opportunities to the learners if it is interactive learning. Poetry is embellished with rhythm, beautiful wording and promoted grammatical features. These features can serve as a powerful teaching material which helps motivate students in learning grammar, vocabulary and integrated language skills. Kirkgoz (2008 : 97) described the selection guidelines of poems that the poems need to be relevant to students' age and interests and in the language textbooks students should be familiar with.

Interestingly, there are many researchers who did the studies in using poetry in the language classroom. First, Susikaran (2013 : 17) mentioned that simple poems could promote students in studying grammar besides concentrating from the language esthetics. It was found that poem is a powerful material to students to practice grammar structure in studying English. Second, Cetinavci (2012 : 75) investigated that the study was motivated the useful of poetry as being remote from language teaching contexts. The result of the study showed that most of participants were satisfied to use poetry in teaching because it can help the youth learners develop the language proficiency more effectively. Last, Alabi (2015 : 23) used novel, poetry and drama as a medium of teaching English as a foreign language in the classroom, and found that it helped students realize that literature solves language problems. It familiarized students with new words while reading the text. And it was also an interactive section in the class and even enhances students' understanding of the subject.

### **Needs to study word categories**

One of the effective ways of learning language is that the learners should balance the cognitive of learning grammar and vocabulary. Moreover, teaching English, learning vocabulary is one important step that can help promote students in learning cognitive about vocabulary. Categorizing words in order to determine the categorical status of an individual words, we can ask whether it asks the inflectional and derivational properties of a particular category of word. For example, we can tell that "happy" is an adjective because it has the derivational properties of typical adjectives. It can take the negative prefix-un (forming the negative adjective unhappy), the comparative/ superlative suffixes -er/ -est (giving rise to the forms happier/happiest), the adverbializing suffix-ly (deriving the adverb happily) and the nominalizing suffix -ness (giving rise to the noun happiness). Categorization problems which illustrate the kind of categorization problems that can arise when we try and categories words (Radford, 2016). Moreover, Swan & Walter (2001), Nimmual (2007 : 25) describe parts of speech that in the English language, words can be

considered as the smallest elements that have distinctive meanings. Based on their use and functions, words are categorized into several types or parts of speech. This article will offer definitions and examples for the 8 major parts of speech in English grammar: noun, pronoun, verb, adverb, adjective, conjunction, preposition, and interjection. Further, Coady & Huckin (1997 : 273) mentioned that vocabulary is the important strategy in learning language because if the learners do not understand the vocabulary, it affects to their reading comprehension.

In Thailand, university students lack of ability in studying English vocabulary and they also cannot identify the part of speech in English sentences or words. Due to this problem, it affects to their ability in learning English such as speaking, reading and writing. In addition to this, there are many researchers who studied problems, barriers in many ways that can help promote students in learning more English vocabulary and word categories and also it can help teachers in teaching English in their language classrooms. For example, Khotsuk, Natpratan & Tayjanant (2015 : 817) illustrated that there are many strategies of learning English vocabulary toward students, that is, memory-related strategies, cognitive strategies, compensatory strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies. From all of these strategies, the affective strategies is that the students can put themselves in the comfort zone and relax. For example, using music to relax from seriousness which students can use this strategies in writing their own learning experience in diary, and having conversation about feelings from learning languages to others. Therefore, the way that can help students in learning word categories by enhancing them to learn from new things is that the teachers use poetry as a medium for teaching due to the style of selected free verse poems which suits students. It consists of aesthetics, rhythm which help students to image about the stories as well as they can enjoy learning and bring them more funnily.

Due to the important and problem of learning English towards university students mentioned above, teachers as a key of role of educational development in this crisis need to solve this problem and shed light on students in learning by using interested strategies which they can further apply it to their real situation. The problem is that students do not know the meaning of vocabulary, cannot read the vocabulary and cannot identify the part of speech which makes them write or speak with the wrong grammar (Nation, 2001 : 23).

As the university lecturers, the researchers would like to study the use of English poetry to enhance students' ability in recognizing word categories of third year students at School of Architecture and Fine Arts, University of Phayao.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of this study are:

1. To study students' ability in recognizing word categories before and after learning English poetry
2. To study the satisfaction of students toward learning English poetry in the classroom

## Research Methodology

### Participants

The participants of this study were 41 third-year students majored in Arts and Design in School of Architecture and Fine Arts selected by purposive sampling method who enrolled English for Specific Purposes course in Semester 1, Academic Year 2016.

### Instruments

The instruments used in this research are described as follows:

#### 1. The Selected Poems

The used poems were 10 poems from the selected book entitled *No Women in Poetry* written by Zakariya Amataya, a winner of S.E.A. Write (South East Asian Writers Awards) in 2010. The poems are *If I Die*, *The Missing*, *Wings*, *Teardrops of Time*, *The Physics of Truth*, *In What Colour shall I Record the Words of Sadness?*, *Beyond the Distant Universe*, *Why Don't You Board the Train?*, *The Song neither Coming nor Going*, and *Where Should I Put These Roses?*. The reason why the researchers choose *No Women in Poetry* is that because it is familiar with students' background knowledge. Furthermore, it mostly takes place in the south of Thailand, and it is actually about events in Thailand which students could be familiar with (Kirkgoz, 2008 : 97).

#### 2. Pretest and Posttest

The English reading test consisted of pre-test and post-test. It consisted of 1 part with 20 items with 8 choices from parts of speech.

#### 3. A Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of 2 parts. The first part consisted of 15 items to study students' satisfaction, and the second part was an open-ended question.

## Procedure

### 1. Selecting the Poems

The 10 poems out of 36 poems used in this study were selected in purposive sampling from the book entitled *No Women in Poetry* written by Zakariya Amataya (Amataya, 2011 : 13). This book was selected as a medium for teaching because it is a master piece that won S.E.A. Write (South East Asian Writers Awards) in 2010. The poems used in this study were *If I Die*, *The Missing*, *Wings*, *Teardrops of Time*, *The Physics of Truth*, *In What Colour shall I Record the Words of Sadness?*, *Beyond the Distant Universe*, *Why Don't You Board the Train?*, *The Song neither Coming nor Going*, and *Where should I put these Roses?*

### 2. Learning Word Categories through Poems

Students studied English poems and part of speech in the class of English for Specific Purposes for 3 weeks.

### 3. Testing on Students' Word Categories Recognition

The English reading test consisted of pre-test and post-test. This tests were designed by the researchers. It consisted of 1 part with 20 items with 8 choices from parts of speech. Moreover, the test of word categories recognition was verified by the three experts and the reliability of the test was at 0.50

#### Data Analysis

The data collected from the test of students' tests. The multiple choices used to measure the students learning word categories. The collected data were analyzed from using statistics to find out means and percentages. The data analysis will be used from the test by percentages, mean score ( $\bar{x}$ ), and standard deviations (S.D.). The result and discussion based on the result of students' gained score of the tests.

The data collection will be divided into 6 main parts as follow:

1. Specify the participants and objects.
2. Preparing the pre-test and post-test.
3. Examining the pre-test from the participants.
4. Editing the test.
5. Collecting data from the objects.
6. Analyzing data from the collected post-test.

#### Findings

##### Test Results

**Table 1** Paired sample statistics of the word categories tests

|           | N  | Mean  | Standard Deviation | Standard Error Mean |
|-----------|----|-------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Pre-test  | 41 | 9.12  | 3.78               | 0.59                |
| Post-test | 41 | 14.66 | 3.03               | 0.47                |

According to Table 1, there were 41 students who did the test, and each test consisted of 20 items. In terms of the mean score ( $\bar{x}$ ), the value of pretest and posttest showed 9.12 and 14.66 respectively. The different value of standard deviation (SD) of the pre-test demonstrated at 3.78, whereas the post-test was at 3.03 which means that it was different at 0.75. For standard error mean, the value of pre-test was 0.59 and the post-test was 0.47 which the difference was at 0.12.

**Table 2** The summary of satisfaction

| The satisfaction   | Mean | Standard Deviation | Meaning of Satisfaction |
|--|------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. The satisfaction towards the subject content  | 4.25 | 0.66               | very                    |
| 1.1 suits with provided time   | 4.61 | 0.70               | the most                |
| 1.2 is interesting and not too difficult   | 4.27 | 0.84               | very                    |
| 1.3 easy to understand and memorize  | 3.71 | 0.78               | very                    |
| 1.4 suits with the students' background knowledge  | 4.10 | 0.49               | very                    |
| 1.5 is useful for the further study  | 4.51 | 0.51               | the most                |
| 2. The satisfaction towards learning procedure from poetry   | 4.38 | 0.73               | very                    |
| 2.1 suits with teaching time   | 4.37 | 0.70               | very                    |
| 2.2 is interesting and not too difficult   | 4.29 | 0.46               | very                    |
| 2.3 students love to study from poetry   | 4.46 | 0.74               | very                    |
| 2.4 students were pleasant   | 4.59 | 0.74               | the most                |
| 2.5 students were eagerly to do activities   | 4.20 | 1.01               | very                    |
| 3. The satisfaction towards teaching instruction   | 4.63 | 0.63               | the most                |
| 3.1 provides teaching activities that enhance students to have more knowledge and can apply in real life | 4.54 | 0.74               | the most                |
| 3.2 enhances students to join the activities   | 4.85 | 0.42               | the most                |
| 3.3 enhances students to learn by self-study   | 4.49 | 0.75               | very                    |
| 3.4 enhances students to develop critical thinking, discussing, asking and giving opinions               | 4.46 | 0.78               | very                    |
| 3.5 students were eagerly to do activities   | 4.80 | 0.46               | the most                |

Due to the summary of the satisfaction of students towards learning English poetry in the classroom shows the three main satisfactions through the subject content, learning procedure from poetry and teaching instruction. In addition to this findings, it may conclude that students were satisfied the teaching instruction the most at the mean score at 4.63, followed by learning procedure from poetry at the mean score at 4.38 and the subject content at the mean score at 4.25 respectively.

Firstly, talking about the satisfaction toward the subject content students agreed that it suited with provided time at the mean score of 4.61, followed by they believed that it was useful for their further study at the mean score of 4.51, interesting and not too difficult at the mean score of 4.27, suits with students' background knowledge at the mean score of 4.10, and it is easy to understand and memorize at the mean score of 3.71 respectively.

Secondly, students rated the satisfaction towards learning procedure from poetry that they were pleasant from learning at 4.59, followed by they love to study from poetry at 4.46, it suits with teaching time at 4.37, it is interesting and not too difficult at 4.29, and they were eagerly to do activities in the class at 4.20 respectively.

Lastly, students shows the satisfaction towards teaching instruction that it enhances them to join the activities at 4.85, followed they were eagerly to do activities at 4.80, then it provides teaching activities that enhance them to have more knowledge and can apply in real life 4.54, it enhances them to learn by self-study at 4.49, and it enhances students to develop critical thinking, discussing, asking and giving opinions at 4.46 respectively.

## Discussion

### 1. Students' learning ability in recognizing word categories of students from learning English poetry

According to the first research objective, "to study students' learning ability in recognizing word categories of students before and after learning word categories from English poems", the findings of the study were shown that the means score of the pre-test and post-test were obviously different. Therefore, this seems to be confirmed that the instruction from English poetry could increase students' word categories recognition. In addition to this, the mean score of the test including pre-test and post-test could confirm the following point because the mean score of pre-test was 9.12 while the mean score of post-test was 14.66. Consequently, the mean score of pre-test and post-test in word categories test could confirm the work of Cetinavci (2012 : 83) that using poetry could enhance students to improve language proficiency. Further, the studies of Coady & Huckin (1997 : 273); Nation (2001: 23) which demonstrated that learning vocabulary is the important part in learning language that will shed light on students' learning ability particularly reading comprehension. Therefore, the conclusion of the word categories test could be finalized that the instruction focusing on English poetry could increase the students' ability in recognizing parts of speech more effectively. This finding was interpreted that the instruction focusing

on English poetry learning ability could increase the students' recognizing word categories competence. This related to the work of Alabi (2015 : 23) who mentioned the use of using poems in the language classroom that it did not only increase literature language skill, but it also helped promote students in obtaining more knowledge in studying new words. Therefore, the students in this study attempted to employ time gaining strategies frequently when there was a communication obstacle emerging from the comprehension.

To illustrate the useful of using poetry in the language classroom, this echoes the work of Susikaran (2013 : 17) that poem could be a tool to students to improve language skill in English such as tenses, article or preposition. Learning from poetry in one of the useful strategies to learn English from literature. It is such one of a great methodology for the educators to imply and intervene in the language classroom. This evidence is supported by Hijazi & Al-natour (2012 : 295) who mentioned that poetry is useful for language teaching such as listening, speaking, reading and writing skill. In addition to this, students also obtain cultural knowledge from studying poetry. Padak (2001 : 1); Ahmad (2014: 123) illustrated that poetry offers many good ways of learning English such as wording and promotes grammatical structure. Therefore, the students in this study attempted to employ time gaining strategies frequently when there was a communication obstacle emerged from the comprehension.

In addition, this finding is in line with (Kirkgoz, 2008 : 96) that the aesthetic of poetry is that it consists of with rhythm that beautifully enhances the readers to continue reading poetry. In this research, the selected poems were familiar with students' background because it mostly takes place in Thailand. This strategy will help promote students learn more effectively from life. According to this, tradition and culture mentioned in the poetry enhanced students to read the poems eagerly. This might be because most of students are non-English major and did not familiar with foreign culture therefore reading poems about Thai culture shed light on them in learning more English effectively. In regard to gaining skills of language, McCall (2004 : 172); Shettel (2011 : 13) illustrated that poetry is useful for students because they could learn more from poems. For example, students who are interested in linguistics could learn about words or phonemes while students who are interested in literature could learn more about history or style of poet's writing. Additionally, Yusef, Haj, Kundu & Satpathy (2016 : 7) said modern poems that direct to student's age and interest might be enhance students' learning most because it relates to their own knowledge and interest.

This findings could present that students' ability in recognizing word categories increased from learning through English poetry.

## **2. The satisfaction of students toward learning English poetry in the classroom**

Due to the second objective of the study, "to study the satisfaction toward students from learning English poetry in the classroom", the findings of the study were shown that most of students were satisfied with teaching instruction through the content, learning from poetry and teaching procedure respectively. The questionnaire investigating the satisfaction of the group (n=41) with the instruction focusing on learning

through English poetry consisted of two parts which were the satisfaction with the instruction focusing on English poetry and an open-ended question.

According to the satisfaction of the contents in the course, learning procedure from the poetry, and teaching instruction were in the level of “very” and “the most” through the satisfaction. Talking about the satisfaction towards the content in the course, most of students were satisfied with the provided time and they believed that it might be useful for their further study in the level of “the most” for their satisfaction. However, they all agreed that the contents in the course also interesting to their learning in the language classroom and not too difficult, easy to understand and memorize, as well as suit with their background knowledge which relates and echoes the work of Kirkgoz (2008 : 97) that if the teacher selects the suitable poems to students, it helps them to understand the poems easily.

Speaking about the satisfaction towards learning procedure from poetry, students were pleasant with learning poetry at the level of “the most”, In addition, they love to study from poetry, and they thought that it suits with teaching time in the class because it is interesting and not too difficult and they were early to do activities in the classroom with friends.

However, students were satisfied with teaching instruction in the level of “the most” which the meaning of satisfaction was the highest comparing with another satisfaction. Further, the reasons that they thought that teaching instruction were attract them because it enhanced them to join the activities in the class, they were eagerly to do the activities and enhanced them to have more knowledge and can apply in real life. Apart from learning in the classroom, learning from poetry enhanced them to learn by themselves and develop their critical thinking, discussion, asking and giving opinions.

To summarize the results of the questionnaire investigating the student’s satisfaction with the instruction from learning poetry, the study showed that using English poetry could help the third year students majoring in Art and Design improve their learning word categories and they were satisfied with the provided course. Consequently, from the satisfaction levels were interpreted “the most and very satisfied” as mentioned in Table 2.

### **Recommendations**

To improve students’ English skill in word categories, this will be definitely a challenge to deal with using English poetry for the further study. At least, this means that this study is the preliminary investigation to raise the importance of English learning awareness that will help improve the language proficiency. For the further study, it would be interesting to explore how teachers can use their own variety of teaching such as using poetry to teach students in the language classroom.

### **Limitation of the study**

1. The current study was limited by data collecting duration, with only three weeks available for the research observations. With the limitation, this could not fully get the rich data of the learning

word categories as the researcher expected. And all participants are non-English major and continually only three weeks in studying therefore if the research lasts more than three weeks, it might be more useful and more effective to students.

2. The limitation of this study was focused only in learning word categories which students could learn other field of study such as vocabulary, grammar or critical thinking.

## Refereces

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