

Ecohumanism in Teaching Poetry for EFL Students in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This article presents a research report on poetry teaching to Indonesian EFL students to investigate their environmental concerns. It first explores the theoretical concepts of global citizenship in the teaching of language and literature in the light of Ecohumanism. Applying metacognitive strategy or self-regulatory learning method, this study uses students' evaluation results, assignments, and reflection notes as data sources. It aims to find out to what extent reading and subsequently writing poems about the environment can raise students' awareness to care for the sustainability of earth resources. The present study reveals that, firstly, there is a lack of concern for the care of the earth, proven by the students' choice of poems to read and write. Secondly, the study shows that self-regulatory learning is suitable to implement here as shown from the students' expanding interests to deal critically with people-nature relationships through poetry reading and writing at the later stage. This study concludes that Ecohumanism as an educational paradigm can establish rationale to include ecology in language and literature teaching. The "what, how, why, and what next" in language and literature teaching should then be geared and habituated continually towards respecting Earth in this mutually dependent world.

Keywords: Ecohumanism; self-regulatory learning; reflection; people-nature poems

INTRODUCTION

Given that language is ideological (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997) and is able to construct reality (Kramsch, 2006), diverse and interconnected societies nowadays should be more aware of the many different ways in which reality is conceived. Innovation, collaboration, and intercultural skills have all become increasingly important, as they reflect various realities, particularly if one wants to become a global citizen of the 21st century.

Therefore, other than fluency in more than one language, the ability to interact is also important as more people are working together in facing such global challenges as extremism, human rights abuse, gender and social class inequities, as well as environmental damages. Language and literature teaching in this age of global interdependencies should thus be intercultural, interactive, and go further than cognitive transfer. It should create opportunities to explore the whole new world, because, following the principle of nature, all things are connected.

This article is to discuss Ecohumanism as a paradigm in language and literature teaching, mindful of the fact that any human activities are responsible for either the preservation or depletion of the earth's resources. Environmental destruction is a shared problem that must then be collaboratively solved among the community of the world. This can be done through education. Therefore, the teaching of language and literature should attend to this problem in order to sustain connectivity as global citizens of this century.

THEORETICAL CONCEPTS

This study argues that teaching poetry to EFL learners by way of metacognitive classroom implementation should aim at respecting the Earth (thus Life itself) in all its diversity as our common home in this interdependent world. It is important to first discuss some theoretical concepts of global citizenship in view of Ecohumanism.

ECOHUMANISM AS EDUCATIONAL PARADIGM

The term “Ecohumanism” has gained momentum at the turn of the century. Michnowski (2008, p. 108), for example, defines Ecohumanism as “partnership-based cooperation for the common good of all people (rich and poor, from countries highly developed and behind in development), their descendants, and natural environment”. He further explains that science and high technology usually support the partnership, hence moving from ego to eco. Throughout his works, Michnowski’s take on Ecohumanism is in agreement with the UN call for fair globalization that allows productive employment and decent work for all. In order to reach sustainable development, Ecohumanistic transformation is a must, combining two transformations: humanistic and eco-developmental (Michnowski, 2002; Michnowski, 2010).

Also central to Ecohumanism is peaceful natural coexistence developed theoretically by Martha Nussbaum whose numerous works contribute to the worlds of philosophy and education. Nussbaum (2011) uses two-prong Kantian-Aristotelian approach to talk about ethics and public policy of animal treatment. Following Kant, she argues that first, we must respect each individual with emotion and feelings as an end in itself. Then, she uses neo-Aristotelian idea, i.e. capabilities-theory to claim that each creature, including animal, has its own capacities to function and flourish in its own way, hence needing support from the material and social environment.

Indeed, sustainability is one of the greatest challenges that the world is facing today. Everyone on earth is interconnected by the grave problem of climate change, and people, especially women and children from developing countries are the severely affected groups. Climate change is real; it is the result of human actions as argued by Pope Francis in *Laudato si’* (“Praise be to you, my Lord”) released in 2015 (Dewi, 2015; Dewi, 2017). This Encyclical Letter by the Head of the Catholic Church is offered in 8 languages (i.e. Italian, German, English, Spanish, French, Polish, Portuguese, and Arabic) and soon to be translated into world languages not only for Catholics but also for everyone who are affected by severe problems of climate change. Taking care of the Divine creation is a moral obligation for people of all faiths. People’s care for plants, animals, and one another reflects human cooperation with God’s plan (Francis, 2015). *Laudato si’* can thus be seen as a document on Ecohumanism, addressing as it does, global imbalance whereby corporate entities continue to indulge their appetite to exploit nature at the expense of the poor who are the most grieved because they are deprived of the bounties of nature.

Suffice to say that for now, earth depletion has expedited the paradigm shift in education toward Ecohumanistic pedagogy. UNESCO has called for sustainable education for sustainable future since the late 20th century and achieved some considerable success with the profusion of Nature/Green schools or, to use the United Nation terms, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in the Western hemisphere and later practiced throughout the world (Hopkins & McKeown, 1999; Sauv , 1996). According to Ball & Lai (2006), educational reformation has begun to aim at better service for the social and ecological well-being of particular places since 1970s. They argue that Ecohumanism can be seen as a response within ecologized humanist tradition in challenging the individualistic liberal theory of the Enlightenment.

It is clear now that the presence of ecological design schools and the inclusion of Ecohumanism into curriculum system is an urgency (Sterling, 2001, Venkataraman, 2009), although it is not without challenges as shown by the wealth of scholarships in the field (Ashford, 2004; Nicolaides, 2006; Barth et al., 2007; Arbuthnott, 2009). In general, as shown in these studies, it is not always easy to implement ESD as to make it creative, effective, and acceptable to the established disciplines. Teaching and research in multi-disciplinary fields is often hard to co-exist in a meaningful way.

The work of Somerville (2007) is useful here, proposing a critical place-based or place-conscious education. As an inhabitant of La Trobe Valley, Australia, Somerville is concerned about the global cyber world generation of today whose sense of connection to place may well be in decline. Meanwhile, Cocks (2013) believes in the use of storytelling in his attempts to transfer values to the students. Here we see that to probe further people-nature relations by way of Ecohumanistic education is of vital importance. The section that follows is to examine what works in language and literature studies.

ECOLOGY IN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE LEARNING

Teaching language and literature is by default teaching character education; and as shown above, for over the past two decades UNESCO has continued to promote the link between education and sustainable living or ecology. Good literature is repository of guidance, wisdom, and countless humanity themes such as birth, growth, death, relationships and nature. As Cocks (2013, p. 364) says, storytelling is “an old social technology”, that is, a powerful socialization and communication technology to mold and reinforce values, beliefs, customs, traditions, attitudes, etc. via myths, sagas, fables, legends, plays, folktales, and many more. The teaching of language and literature is therefore an opportunity to unite academics and character education including environmental awareness. Using Ecohumanism as educational paradigm, it helps students as well as teachers to fulfill the purpose in life and seek to grow beyond the individual self in order to co-exist in this world.

Also said elsewhere (Dewi, 2017), it is necessary to make parents/teachers/writers of children’s literature aware of the opportunity for eco education through stories about people and nature, for many conservation stories are able to empower and help children and adults alike, particularly in changing their attitude towards the environment. Ecoliteracy is thus important, and the teaching of language and literature with social and ecological transformation in mind is not impossible (Wiriyachitra, 2002; Tudor, 2003; Dewi, 2017). Along with Wiriyachitra and Dewi who investigate the practice of Ecohumanism in language and literature teaching in Thailand and Indonesia, respectively, Tudor reminds us that the suitability of theory and method as well as practical realization is of significant consideration when one applies ecological approach worldwide (2003).

METHOD

This study essentially grew out of my own inquisition: How can poetry be taught in a way that will not only capture students’ imaginations but also motivate them to love environment whilst enjoying poetry’s rhythms and rhymes? To answer the question, I made use of my teaching activity using metacognitive strategy and analyzed the students’ progress through their weekly assignments and exam papers containing reflection notes as data. Metacognitive strategy or self-regulatory skills (Oxford in Richards & Lockhart, 2005, p. 64) was the chosen strategy because it allows students to profile and evaluate their learning. The bulk of research in the use of metacognition for EFL reading and writing such as that of Macaro (2006) and Zhang (2010) has shown that self-regulatory learning helps improve learners’ autonomy.

Also useful here are some recent studies set in countries with comparable EFL context, such as in Iran, carried out by Bidabadi & Yamat (2013) and Roohani & Asiabani (2015). Ecohumanism that becomes the pedagogic principle can best be materialized through learning strategies that go beyond cognitive skills. Using metacognition, students can be taught to reflect on their own thinking; in this case, to care for the earth. It is upon the aforementioned studies on metacognitive praxis in EFL that this current study is built, especially with regard to the three main aspects: (1) organizing, (2) planning, and (3) evaluation.

A total of 27 students in my Poetry class participated in this mini research. Poetry is an elective course for the sixth semester (third year) students of the English Language Education Study Program (ELSP) of Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. As an elective subject for student teachers, Poetry was chosen by these, presumably, 27 interested students or 15% of 177 students enrolled (Cohort 2014). These students had earlier taken compulsory courses in literature, i.e. Introduction to Literature (second semester of the first year) and Prose (first semester of the second year). The students' English Proficiency is upper-intermediate based on Sanata Dharma University's curriculum framework for students of English Education Study Program (Kuswando et al., 2016, p.6) which is comparable to B levels (English Independent User) of Common European Framework of Reference (CERF). Data drawn from Lembaga Penjaminan Mutu dan Audit Internal (LPMAI), i.e. the university's quality assurance and internal audit office shows that the English Proficiency results of the students discussed steadily increase every semester. At the time of study, the students' proficiency is quite high with 87.39 % students earning As and Bs for Reading, Writing, and Grammar.

The amount, duration, and focus of the study are as follows. Data collection was done in one semester (4 months), comprising of 13 meetings of 100 minutes each in addition to the times students spent outside the class to do their homework, preparing for class presentation, and group projects. The study's data sources are mainly documents produced by the students, i.e. assignment and examination papers where students wrote their reflections. Speaking of class observation procedure, I relied naturally on decades of my own teaching experience to use as "guidelines" to capture the students' non-verbal responses, their evocatively meaningful experiences, and various classroom dynamics to draw connection across ideas with regard to their interests and progression of the class. For example, at one point, I decided to use Hip-hop Bunny reciting "I Wondered Lonely as a Cloud" taken from YouTube for interpretation, instead of asking the students to read aloud this famous poem of William Wordsworth as previously planned, much to the students' amusement.

Given that this study seeks to examine whether environmental awareness was shown in the poems they liked to read and write in class, rubrics or other rigid evaluative frameworks to measure in detail their poetry writing skill are not included as instruments since the emphasis is on students' imagination and critical thinking. This is therefore in line with Westheimer's view when saying that education goals in democratic societies should go beyond attainment of standardization, uniformity and quantifiable measure of success, but instead "instilling in [the] students a sense of purpose, meaning, community, compassion, integrity, imagination, and commitment" (2015, p. ix). Accordingly, document analyses mainly involve participants' weekly assignments and two test results.

As for Evaluation, this study uses the English Language Assessment model by Vásquez et al. (2010) involving all aspects of writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and other alternative performance-based assessments, such as presentation, drama, and group projects. It is believed that by reading poems and understanding the authors, and the culture and society that produce them, and subsequently writing poems, students develop the habits of

reading, which increase their creativity and innovation, not only for their own joy of learning, but also to cultivate personal reflexivity and societal, ecological sensitivity.

This article limits itself to only discussing the extents of the sustainability of language that can be built into the reading and writing poems about people-nature relations. It also aims to see the integration of such humanistic value as ecological concerns into cognitive, technical learning and teaching of poetry.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

POEMS ABOUT PEOPLE AND NATURE AS STARTER

First, at the organizing stage, students were to direct their learning by linking new information with already known materials. In the light of sustainable development framework, I renewed the existing syllabus and chose teaching materials which can be possibly linked with conservation themes. Students were later assigned to choose their learning materials as part of their self-monitoring skills (Oxford via Richards & Lockhart, 2005; Vásquez et al., 2010; Negretti, 2012).

It has been mentioned in the syllabus that the first five meetings introduce students with types of poetry and its intrinsic elements (form, sound, theme, diction, figurative language, tone, etc.) Out of thirteen meetings, three meetings are allocated for assessment (Progress Test One, Progress Test Two and Final Examination). The rest of the meetings discuss extrinsic elements of poetry (authorship, social backdrop, history) of the poems discussed. Selection of texts is made based on authors (classic and contemporary), topics (people and nature) and types (lyric, dramatic, free verse). Popular categories were used such as “ten poems worth memorizing”, “five best British/American poets”, “twenty must-read environmental poems”, “all nature poems you should know”, and many more to help me select the poems.

The first step, then, was to make students read each of the poem provided and discuss it in groups to report back to the whole class. Questions for discussion generally limit on (1) content and structure of the poem during the first five meetings in one semester, and (2) background and inference of the poem during the last five meetings. Here, students were encouraged to find answers through individual exercises and group discussions/projects. The role of the lecturer was to bring various threads together.

The students' attention were drawn to two main topics, i.e. people and nature. Some selected poems can be easily categorized as poems about people, for example “Dream Deferred” by Langston Hughes, “Richard Cory” by Edwin Arlington Robinson, Robert Browning’s “Meeting at Night”, “If I Were God” by an anonymous poet, Maya Angelou’s “Still I Rise”, etc. Other poems use nature as the subject such as “The Eagle” by Alfred, Lord Tennyson, William Wordsworth’s “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud”, English Nursery Rhyme “If I Were an Apple”, “Pray to What Earth” by Henry David Thoreau. Other poems discussed in class metaphorically allude to people when talking about nature, such as “Fame is a Bee” by Emily Dickinson and Robert Frost’s two famous poems “Fire and Ice” and “Mending Wall”.

Next, the immediate follow-up of this cognitive activity had students choosing their own poems to study for enrichment. Each participating student picked out poems s/he liked from the internet to analyze. Famous poems by Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost, Robert Burns, and Pablo Neruda were chosen by 40% of the students. The rest of the students took current blog poems (48%), poems written by other students (8%); and, interestingly enough, one student (4%) preferred to analyze a poem she composed herself. Emily Dickinson’s “Death” tops the list of 5 favorite poems followed by her “You Cannot Make Remembrance Grow”;

“I Don’t Love You” by Pablo Neruda comes next; and one cyber poem “From My Heart” by Mrs. Creeves. The students like Dickinson’s poems because her poems had been previously discussed quite at length and performed in a poetry recital. Next, the love and friendship poem by Mrs. Creeves easily stole the students’ heart due to its relatable context and delightful rhyme. As for Pablo Neruda, it would seem that this Chilean poet is known by the students mainly for his love poems. They are not aware of Neruda’s prolificacy in ecological poems as shown recently by Khosravi, Vengadasamy & Raihanah (2017). In other words, Neruda is chosen not because of his nature poems; his love poems instead appeal most to the students.

Almost 99% of the chosen poems are about People – their contemplation about life and death, success and failure, and relationships. With the exception of one student’s choice of “I Am Dying” by Marie Negus (taken from familyfriendpoems.com) about global warming, the participating students did not select Nature poems to analyze.

It can be seen here that unless the students were specifically assigned, they preferred to discuss poems related to their palpable day-to-day experiences, such as college life, friendship, falling in love, etc. For example, Audrey, one of the high-achieving students has this to say when opting for Dickinson’s “Death”: “This poem seems very real for every human being. Everyone will die eventually. It is an experience that no one can avoid”. Similarly, for Mariam who claims that “poem is a place to [express] our thoughts and feelings”, a poem written by her classmate Sita is her choice to discuss because it “reflects students’ life” who are often overburdened by assignments and their lack of time for proper meals and a good night sleep. This is to say that environmental damage is not of important concern for most students in this study. When talking about nature and/or environment, they would rather talk about social environment vis-à-vis environmentalism (ecological activism).

In the end, the students were asked to reflect on how poems may change their perspectives. The students invariably answered two main questions: “What is a poem for you?” and, “Will you use poems to teach your students in the near future?” My intention is to know about students’ general perspective about poems in general and its possible use in EFL class. On the definition question, students’ reflection notes reveal that for them, poetry is an expression of different feelings and emotion through words. Many believed that poetry must be written in beautiful but brief sentences unlike short story or novel, while a few liken it to art forms. One student, Sam said, “In my opinion, [poetry] is like music. It is one of the ways to express myself. Sometimes, it is the way to run away for a while because by [writing] a poem, [my soul gets] better.” Like Sam, Andy concurred that poetry is “the writer’s soul...the reflection of the writer.” It is interesting to note that Andy’s chosen poem was actually the lyrics to the song, “The Sound of Silence” by The Disturbed. Beside expressions of mixed emotions, some students mentioned that creativity is involved in creating a poem. It is for the purpose of enhancing creativity that some students enjoyed studying poetry and would consider using it to teach their students in the future.

The reflection summaries also indicate that 88% of the participating students liked poetry although it can be a difficult to read and analyze. It must be mentioned here that the English Proficiency of the students studied varies between intermediate (B1) for Writing, and upper-intermediate (B2) for Reading. One student admitted that in the beginning he did not like poetry because he grappled with the diction, but he then reflected: “After tak[ing] this class I think I like poetry because it can help me develop my English.” It is clear that the metacognitive strategy applied here works quite well. The students were aware of what they learned and are able to apply it efficiently to improve their learning. Indeed, in an EFL classroom, metacognition method can positively lead students to reflect on their own thinking (Negretti, 2012; Zhang, 2010; Schraw, 1998).

As for the second question on whether or not they will teach poetry in class, all of them said “Yes” for a variety of reasons. First, they would use poetry to teach language skills (particularly reading and writing), grammar, and vocabulary (44%). Second, some students consider poetry as a means of self-expression with which, said Vicky, “students can write anything in their mind[s] and heart[s] and put their feelings into words.” As many as 40% of the students shared Vicky’s opinion. Further still, other students claimed that using poetry in an EFL classroom would benefit them in many ways, i.e. better appreciation of literature, increasing motivation of social values like teamwork, care, and compassion (12%). Martina was inspired by the poetry-turn-to-song class presentation and decided to use similar method later to sharpen her future students’ understanding. She explained her positive experience saying that it “drives the students into collaborative learning.” Despite saying “Yes”, one student in class (4%) was somehow in doubt about using poetry to teach because she herself did not really like writing poems.

It can be concluded that at this stage, introducing students to poems about People and Nature can hardly make them sufficiently aware of environmental problems, hence calling for the need of self-regulatory learning. Reading more ecological poems and later trying to write poems repeatedly about people-nature relationships may boost students’ ethical values, leading them to embrace earth-centric rather than human-centric world-view. This will be discussed further in the following section.

WRITING POEMS, SAVING THE EARTH

Secondly, at the planning stage, the focus is writing activity. Writing is an applied metacognitive skill that helps language learners to know “what” and “how” to write. Furthermore, at the higher order of thinking, they also know “why” they write what they write (Magno, 2008; Dewi, 2009; Negretti, 2012). Writing is central in language arts assessments since it helps empower learners “to voice themselves and to challenge and change the world in which they live” (Myhill & Watson, 2011, p. 56). As suggested much earlier by Vengadasamy (2002), students are capable of critically and analytically looking at their own writing as well as becoming responsible for what they write when they are allowed to set their own goals and regularly monitor themselves.

As such, having seen the fact that ecological awareness was thus far almost absent, I set out a writing plan for the class as self-monitoring activities to write more poems using the Nature theme, plus other topics to their liking. The poems should be written in different forms, such as acrostic, diamante, clerihew, found and shape poems. To help students decide on what to write, I asked them to write one poem about “things they saw in nature”, and another poem on “things observable in our society”.

Myhill and Watson (2011) claim that writing is a planned and designed activity. Using a variety of modes and formats, writing involves linguistic and visual skills, creativity and social preferences. Because writing is also a process, they argue further, thinking about and reflecting on the design and process is important with which the teacher can help facilitate (pp. 67-69). Thus, using this metacognitive disposition, the students appeared to take delight in writing free verses with three most-liked designs, i.e., acrostic, shape poem, and clerihew (especially for People poems).

The exercise results show that the students liked to write poems about nature using either acrostic or shape poem as format. The design and/or topics that appeared most frequently include flower, tree, leaf, and water drop. Some other favorite shapes are sun, moon, cloud, and drops of rain. But the leaf shape remains the much loved as it appeared regularly in the students’ exam papers. When writing about social issues, many students wrote humorously about public figures using clerihew format.

Speaking of themes, the participating students seem to define environment as nature (non-human) alone, whereas social issue is taken to mean that of human beings only. Consequently, what the students wrote include description of nature (18%), their admiration toward nature (14%), and their gratitude of it (12%). Seen from the topic of most poems, people-nature relation is thus absent in Ecocritical sense. They did write about the beauty of nature, about people who adore and are grateful to nature, but not about the ways in which people abuse nature. Many poems hardly consider environmental problems as today's grave social concerns. The rest (56%) are poems on other subjects: politics, especially on corrupt officials (24%); love and relationships (17%); and famous people like the then Jakarta's first ethnic Chinese governor, Basuki "Ahok" Tjahaja Purnama (11%), Sukarno, Obama, and two celebrities (4 %). Here we see that more habituated writing exercises are needed to increase students' sense of sustainable belonging to care more for our planet.

The next planned writing was conducted during midterm exam (Progress Test 2). One part of the exam questions (Question E) is to write two poems: one about nature and the other, social commentary. Out of the 27 students taking the exam, 4 students failed Question E, 3 students wrote only the second part of the question, i.e. writing social comments using clerihow. For reason of brevity, cited here is the relevant writing result with nature as a subject matter. Students invariably wrote poems about rain, sun flower, tree and water. Here we see that under certain conditions as exam requirements, nature poems would appear. Nonetheless, it is a relief to come across two truly ecologically inclined poems. The two poems make up 4% of the total 20 nature poems submitted prior to the final assessment to be discussed later. One of the poems, written by Vida is a free-verse, written on a leaf shape template: Where is the green?// Because all I see is grey.// Where is the green?// They say, "Humans take it all away!"/ Monochrome is boring// Let's paint it green!// And you'll see they are smiling// Monochrome is gone.

REFLECTION ON USING POETRY FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Finally, at the evaluation stage, a variety of classic and contemporary poems were given to students for them to analyze and rank each poem by order of preference, i.e. "Thank You" by Ross Gay, "Palm Tree" by Rabindranath Tagore, "Fables" by Julie Grenness, and "Nothing Gold Can Stay" by Robert Frost. This assessment was assigned as the final examination, conducted after the thirteen class sessions had been completed. As will be shown shortly, this phase serves as a useful platform for students to reflect on their learning.

A brief description about each poem is necessary. Written by contemporary (blog, cyber) writers, both "Thank You" and "Fables" are poems about people-nature relationships. While "Thank You" reveals how the speaker wants to be in the grandeur of nature and just be grateful to be part of it, "Fables" is a short ecological poem that laments the ignorance of the superficial, fragmented society, lack of wise leaders, unjust economy, and environmental damage. The background of each poet is a useful selection clue for me although the students may not know fully the background of the poets except for their names. The writer of the first poem "Thank You", Ross Gay, teaches at Indiana University in Bloomington. He serves as a board member for a non-profit project called "free-fruit-for-all food justice and joy". "Thank You" is included in Gay's collection of poems *Catalog of Unabashed Gratitude* that recently won Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award. As for the other poet, Grenness is a senior Australian ESL/English, Math and Science Tutor who loves writing poems mostly about peace, justice, and earth care. "Fables" is among the list of famous ecological poems published in several unrestricted websites.

Meanwhile, the classic poets with their long renowned poems need no introduction. Rabindranath Tagore uses the iconic palm tree from his country of origin India, to teach

readers about the value of humility against pride. “Palm Tree” tells of the tree’s wishful thinking to reach the sky using its leaves, which are mistaken as wings to fly around the world. The poet symbolizes the arrogance of a person who forgets his/her roots and tries to be someone else. “Nothing Gold Can Stay” is among the collection of poems that earned Robert Frost the 1924 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry. Using nature as the main symbol for his theme, the American poet shows us the cycle of life and how life is temporary. As such, all beautiful things will eventually fade away. Here the speaker reminds us to treasure every moment we have in our lives.

Thus being said, the discussion now turns to the assessment results. Arbuthnott (2009) has cautioned about the challenge of making sustainable education practically relevant to the learners’ needs. Students will not realize that any environmental problem is a universal problem that will affect them, until they are led to think through it. This is true in this current research whereby the 27 participating students expressed their slow but increasing awareness of preserving nature. The final assessment covers 3 queries: (1) poem analysis and preference, (2) composition, and (3) reflection.

First, in terms of understanding the meanings of the four poems, most students did not experience reasonable difficulties because students had already been taught the three easy steps of understanding a poem suggested by Timpane and Watts (2001), i.e. read, speculate, and interpret. Almost all students then read them correctly as evident from the proper answers they gave for the structure and poetic devices of each poem. Only 7 out of 27 students gave the incorrect answers for the types of figurative language in the poems. The speculation ability of nearly 88% of the students, likewise, is quite good with which they were able to interpret the poems: gratitude to nature (“Thank You”); pride (“Palm Tree”); social ills (“Fables”), and temporariness (“Nothing Gold”). While there is no fixed answer for literary interpretations (Vásquez, 2009), some untrained eyes found the old poems harder to understand than the contemporary blog poems. Many admitted the difficult, implied meanings in “Thank You” and Tagore’s poem. This difficulty has some influence on the poems they chose by order of preference, to which the discussion now turns.

“Fables” is the students’ most favourite poem chosen by 41% of the students. “Nothing Gold Can Stay” is nominated next (30%). “The Palm Tree” occupies the third place (18%) to be followed by “Thank You” (11%). “Fables” wins the students’ attention on account for the pertinent commentaries on today’s social and environmental problems. The earth-care message in “Thank You” however is not very clear to some students. As for the older poems, some students favored them for the moral values. Students’ familiarity with Frost may contribute to their choice of “Nothing Gold Can Stay” as the second best poem. Using nature as a symbol of human behavior, “The Palm Tree” is not a simple poem to interpret despite its sensible, everyday diction, hence occupying the third place. Taken together, the reflection reviews show that pro-nature poems get 52% votes (increasing by 8% compared to the earlier assessment), while poems using nature as a subject matter to talk about people’s morality receive 48%. While this is no good news for ecological awakening, such results nevertheless demonstrate a change of perspective towards earth-care attitude.

Secondly, progress is also apparent in the Nature poems written by the students in that the themes include admiration as well as conservation of nature. It is worthy to note that in the previous writing exercises, the students mostly described the beauty of nature as proven in their poems about flower, plant, sun, moon, and ocean. Onto a leaf-shaped template, for example, Sony wrote his poem, “Last Leaf”: When the money is more// Important than leaf,// Could every penny you have// Give you breath?// Tree is not gold// But it’s important to hold. Another environmental message comes from Agatha’s acrostic poem read “Earth”: Earth is our heart, our life// All we need is already given by the earth// Remember! The earth is getting older and older// To thank the earth, love earth// Help the earth to stay longer.

Lastly, the reflection reports obtained from the students' final examination paper on the poetry's transformative power reveal that earth-centric world-view is still hard to find. Although almost 97% of the statements show that the poems do make a profound effect on the way they see themselves, the world, and other people's lives, no particular mention of ecology is present. For Sita, to mention one of them, she believed that poems made people think and feel more deeply. "[Poetry] helps me to be a more sympathetic person", she maintains, "I can relate with other people because of poetry." Sony, whose pro-nature poem is earlier cited, said that poetry is often more powerful than action. Resistance poetry by the Indonesian poet Remi Silado, he further illustrated, effectively serves as hidden critiques toward President Suharto's dictatorship.

On whether reading and writing poems makes them aware of nature and environment, this statement received agreement by 41% of the 27 students – a smaller amount than those who equally approved of the transformative power of poetry. These students picked up the collective message that people should take care of the natural wealth. Vicky's attention to ecological issue is clear in her statement as follows: "Nature is the source of living, and we also belong to it. Therefore, we should never ruin our own home." Vida, who wrote a poem about the value of even a drop of water, said in her reflection that we should let "other people or next generation [suffer the] bad effects of our behavior." Only 2 students (7%) did not see how poetry may transform them, saying that the language of poetry was difficult. Surprisingly, these two students were in fact doing quite well judging from their weekly assignments/performances, hence demonstrating the discrepancy of language proficiency and literary interests which often occur in EFL (Akyel & Yalcin, 1990; Hall, 2005).

In sum, the challenge for the language and literature teaching for the millennial generation is to integrate sustainable development goals more fully. Competence in socio-linguistic proficiencies must be duly accompanied by imaginative, innovative, as well as ethical capabilities.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to provide a picture of how Ecohumanism is aptly used as a philosophical basis as well as pedagogic strategy in language and literature teaching, in this case, poetry teaching. This study has argued that ecological approach in teaching language and literature is a need, bearing in mind that ecological transformation is part of character education required for the twenty first century global citizenship.

This research has also shown that ecological concern is still low among most students since they have been inadequately perceptive of the impending danger of environmental degradation. It thus confirms the claim that Somerville (2007) has made, which suggests for the revitalization of young people's connection and memory with place and environment particularly in light of the allure and ease of technological development.

It would be a mistake, however, to place the reflection of these students simply on an undesirable, pessimistic tone. They have, by and large, heard and learned about global warming and the risks it entails, yet they need to be continually reminded to develop a habit to opt for "thinking green". The students may know what the right things to do for the environment, but they need to be persistently encouraged. Meta-cognitive language and literature learning strategy by way of reading and subsequently writing ecological poems on regular basis is therefore, one of the methods of encouragement.

To sum up, this research raises several issues and queries to pursue further. *First*, education for global citizenship in the 21st century is responsible for sustainable development that calls for real actions in order to live in a better earth. Ecohumanism is therefore a suitable pedagogical philosophy to ensure transformative learning experiences that prepare students to

participate in maintaining a sustainable future. *Secondly*, Ecoliteracy can be aptly promoted in language and literature learning so as to make students gain not only knowledge and language skills, but also values to address the environmental and social challenges of this century. *Thirdly*, classroom implementation in teaching poetry has shown that environmental awareness is yet to grow and nurture. However, considering that the students under discussion unanimously agree that poetry represents the author's feelings, self-regulatory learning approach is appropriate to increase students' social and ecological concerns. It is important that students know not only "what, how, and why" they read poetry, but also "what next". The 21st century education should promote this earth-citizenship thinking. Continual efforts, this study would finally conclude, need to be made to uphold such enthusiasm, given that young people's attention today is sometimes easily sidetracked by the aimless inducement of modern technology.

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