Piscayanti

by Kadek Piscayanti

Living in My Voice and Choice: A Poetry-Based Mindfulness in EFL Classroom

Kadek Sonia Piscayanti
Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha
sonia.piscayanti@undiksha.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Poetry is an expression of thoughts and feelings with words. Poetry in language learning is the bridge to communicate ideas and unheard voice. This research is aimed at exploring the voice and choice, the emotion and expression of language learners from three poetry of three different poets in EFL classroom with mindfulness approach. Mindfulness approach allows them to be more aware of the novel situation flexible to context, having multi perspectives, and create a production. The method used is narrative inquiry with mindful journal as instrument. The findings showed that the poetry the learners write have the power to explore the learners' ability in stimulating their truest voice and choice from within, as well as to stimulate the language creativity and productivity. By having sensitivity, the creativity is born and productivity is born too. In the context of language learning, the language learners are more open about their identity, their purest voice, and their alternative solution of life's problem. Mindfulness is not only as tool to stimulate the voice but also stimulate the choice of the poets.

Key words: mindfulness; poetry; voice; choice

INTRODUCTION

Language learning takes place when the language learners make meaning from the language and make use of the language to express their ideas, thought, and feelings. Language is learned by the process of meaning making and experiencing the language in the real life experience. However, in the context of EFL the gap between language learners and English is wide, because there are culture gap, social gap, and personal gap. The gap is even wider when language is learned textually, not contextually, and not from the perspective of the learners. With the existing problem in EFL, where language is taught with textbooks, and not with experience, language learning is meaningless. Hanauer (2012) stated that language learning within textbook and result oriented system makes the language learners just intellectuals, not fully human beings with ideas. The learning takes place repetitively and mindlessly. The language is memorized, not learned. Langer (1989) views this as mindlessness. Mindless learning means learning happens without reflection, without innovation, and without new perspectives. As opposed to mindlessness, Langer propose mindfulness, where learners involve and evolve in the learning. In this context, learners should be

124
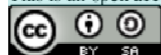
engaged with the language without being forced. Learners should be given choices to speak their mind in order to have the ownership of the language. They should be stimulated and motivated to notice new things from the new language and to create a new perspective out of it. By being actively engaged with new things, they will be more flexible and open. Mindfulness is the approach where language learning can happen in its most authentic discovery of the language. Firstly introduced by Langer in 1989, mindfulness has four main principles; finding novelty, being flexible, aware of the context, and create new categories. The principles give a whole new perspective on language learning. It gives freedom and choices for learners to view world differently. According to Langer (1997), when individuals are given choices, they will be more engaged with the language because they will be more open to information and they will be responsible to the process of learning. Further, Langer described that when learners have freedom to define their learning, they will have more choices to solve challenges and problems because there is no single perspective on the process. Sherretz (2011) further confirms that giving choices to learners will encourage critical thinking and combinational thinking, therefore the learners could maximize their meaning making. They can be themselves and at the same time can contribute their voice to create new context and new perspective.

Hoffman (1993) stated that language can bridge the ideas of anything; feeling, facts, stories, fantasies, lies, possibilities, and many things. This means that language is the medium to present the world of meanings. In this sense, it can rediscover many more meaning behind the expression. Language expression which contains the world of meaning is found in poetry. Poetry in the context of language learning can be a medium to express the voice and choice of the learners. Hanauer (2012) argues that poetry writing can make meaningful learning. From poetry, language learners can learn that meaning can be made personally, and contextually. It is also stated that Poetry can give ability to the reader to gain more information and affection at the same time (Rejeki et al., 2022). It can also welcome many perspectives that there is no single truth on each perspective. The meaning is rich and never ends. At the learning process, there is a combinational thinking and that each of the learner can show their voice. They can be human being with soul and emotions to be expressed. Therefore, mindfulness approach is needed to stimulate their creativity and productivity. They are given space to find novelty in the things they see, the context they are living in, the perspective they are building and the new category that they create. However, the research on mindfulness and EFL poetry is still rare, especially in Indonesian context. Earlier research, Piscayanti et.al (2020) and Piscayanti (2021) on mindfulness in EFL poetry writings showed that poetry can increase language creativity and productivity. From this research, there is still room to be explored more on detail description on how it happens from the perspective of the learners. The narrative behind every poetry is examined. The novelty of this research is to offer perspective that mindfulness as a learning pedagogy combined with poetry writing can engage and evolve language learners in rising their voice and choice.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mindfulness offers flexibility of things. Mindfulness shapes new perspective, new possibilities of new knowledge. Mindfulness brings about evolution in education because it changes the mindlessness in learning. Since Langer introduced mindfulness in 1989, there is a wave of mindfulness in many fields, from education to health, from personal to social issues. In 2001, Langer stated that mindfulness is the root of creativity and evolution of culture. It is the foundation of learning. Langer (2016) stated that learners must make learning meaningful therefore they can

125

make a productive learning. Moafian et.al (2019) elaborated that the focus of mindfulness is on the invention of something new, invention of perspectives, and invention of reflections. Wang et.al (2017) stated that mindfulness makes the students aware of self-voice and identity, self-reflection, and self-determined. This helps them grow better emotionally. Davenport and Pagnini (2016) found that mindfulness grows 21st century skills namely creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking. By having those skills, learning happens meaningfully and naturally. Mindfulness and meaning making are two things that can not be separated. As mentioned earlier, language learners learn better when they are mindful. This is where language experience can happen from personal perspective. It can happen through poetry.

Poetry is the soul of society. Poetry is the feeling of the society as it is mentioned by Gustafson (2005). It captures the personal feeling perfectly and there is emotional journey that involves the learners deeply. Language is the medium to capture that engagement and involvement of the feeling. Poetry is the verbal work of art (Perrine, 1982). Poetry enables the learners to view things personally and make a perspective from personal point of view. Hanauer (2012) implemented poetry as learning pedagogy and make language learning happens from the learners' perspective, as personal and expressive voice. He showed that poetry can be the tool to gain voice from within. He also countered opinion that only first language speakers can write a poetry. From his study it was proven that poetry writing is a simple way to make language personal and expressive. Teaching language with poetry was also done by Iida (2016) who found that poetry is a medium to express language identity. Through Japanese poetry (*haiku*), the learners can pour out their personal experience as a tool to communicate their ideas. They can gain the ownership of language by experiencing the events that make them learned.

Piscayanti (2021) elaborated that poetry and mindfulness make a voice of identity, where self-experience is a centre of the voice. This goes along with findings by Byrne (2015) that proved poetry is an expression of identity. Poetry reveals not only the personal perspective, but alternative of perspective. With more perspectives, language will be better served as medium of alternatives both as ideas and as solution of problems. The voice and choice the poetry offer can inspire and empower the reader. This is why this research is meaningful to be done, to see from the poets' perspective on how they write poetry so they can empower others.

METHODOLOGY

The method of this research is narrative inquiry. According to Webster and Mertova narrative inquiry is used to record human experience through stories (Webster & Mertova, 2007). Narrative inquiry is the process of gaining data through stories, in this context to find meaning from the poetry written by the language learners. The subjects here are 15 language learners of English Language Education Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha. They are treated for 16 times of mindfulness approach in poetry course. Among those 15, for the context of this article, only three poets with their poetry and stories are analyzed. Their poetry is analyzed with content analysis, especially the literary and linguistic choices while their narrative journal is analyzed with the construct of mindfulness to gain the understanding of voice and choice of the poets.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Poetry 1
Numb

(Dwi Wahyuni)

Is it me? Am I that poker faced girl?
I wonder why she blankly stares at me,
I see no lights in her eyes,
I hear slightly muted impulse,
I wanted to hold her, but the mirror blocked the way.

She pretends as if she's always in control,
She feels numb,
She reaches out her hand to her heart,
She worries about her impulse, She
shows the poker face.

I finally understand I cannot save her,
I say I am quite similar to her,
I dream of her showing emotions,
I try to write a smile on her face,
I hope she changed someday, because It is
me, I am that poker faced girl.

From the poetry above the analysis of linguistic aspects can be seen from the linguistic choices, such as figurative language used in the poetry. Here the poet only uses two types of linguistic features, namely denotation and metaphor. Denotation is the literal meaning of the words. It can be seen through almost the entire poetry that the poet uses denotation to convey her ideas. Perrine (1982) stated that the basic part of the meaning is denotation meaning. This is also called the dictionary meaning or the literal meaning. The meaning of the words are directly presented. It can be assumed that the poet wants to show her directness of voice, the emphasis on the meaning, without being judged by a lot of layered meanings. She wants the direct ideas of meaning, since the power of the words already mean the ideas she keeps behind. With short words, clear, and condensed words, denotation as her choice is representing a natural voice coming from her feeling.

Apart from denotation, metaphor is also used in the poetry for example in the *line "I see no lights in her eyes", "she shows the poker face". In "I see no lights in her eyes"* she compared the lights to the bright life, bright hopes, bright future of the girl. Through metaphor she represents the voice of herself, that she did not see any hope from herself, since she was muted, considered as numb, having no control though she pretends she does. The meaning of this poetry can be seen from many perspectives, as the lines offer world of meaning. As Perrine (1982) confirmed that poetry says more intensely than ordinary language does. It concerns with experience it offers. Here the experience the poet offers is the voice of rebel, that the poet wants to go out from the zone she is trapped within, but feels reluctant to do so, because of the society force.

127

Now, take a look on what is the narrative behind from the perspective of the poet on why she writes the poetry, what is the story, and how she faces it. This is her narrative journal.

Narrative Journal 1

"Verbal bullying and invalidation had a big influence on who I am today, it influenced my personality. Every time I look at myself in the mirror, the words or those verbal bullies that I wanted to forget come back, and strangely enough, I justified them. What I see in the mirror validate those words, as they are buried in my mind and often haunt me whenever I wanted to try new things. Phrases like "hoo, it's true what they say" or "it's true, this type of person like you don't deserve to feel this way" or "they said that people who have moles on their lips are usually talkative person, so why am I like a mute person who is disable to talk?"

From the narrative journal, it can be seen that there are four things from mindfulness principles that can be found. First, the novelty of the ideas, in which she found the bullies to be inspiration to write. Before, she handled bully with negativity. However the moment she realized it, and accepts it and writes it, is the moment of truth. She is brave to face herself and reflects herself. Second, her insecurity can turn her into power because she is able to write a poetry on her own. This flexibility is the principle of mindfulness that helps her adapt herself. Third, from the context, she knows that society has the voice on her appearance, yet, she also has the voice to be heard. Her voice is shown with poetry which contains more denotation, as if she wants to directly talks to society about her identity. Lastly, she could produce new category of poetry, a poetry on her own language that is born from her own experience. In this context, she could create her personal meaning construction in which she could make the sense of the world around her. She is not forced to do so, she is not limited to what she has to say, and she has the choice to speak up loudly in words. This goes along to the research done by Gustafson (2005) which assumed that poetry is the feeling of society. Tredinnick (2006) also support this idea by confirming that writing is done with integrity and voice of humanity. This is the essence of poetry that it is the voice of thoughts and emotions. The other research which support this findings is study by Iida (2016) which found that through poetry, learners are able to deliver their identity through language, especially English as a foreign language.

Poetry 2

The Unseen
(Winda Suparini)

Live in a vicious world
Where only ravishing can have a spot
Never get any slots
Even less being a mascot

People are so cruel
Don't we have right to feel the space?
Only want to see the peace
Though life doesn't give a chance

We are existed
Earth not only for angels
Nor for the jewels

128

Here the poet uses more metaphors than denotation because she delivers the idea in the hidden meanings. Though the poetry is short, we grasp the meaning that words try to symbolize. "Live in vicious world/Where only ravishing can have the spot" is the metaphors of how the world can be unfair in her perspective that only the beautiful one can be accepted. Further she wrote "We are existed/Earth not only for angels/Nor for the jewels" where she could present her voice that everyone deserves the same existence, not only the beautiful ones.

Here is her narrative behind this poetry.

Narrative Journal 2

"When I was in high school, I was one of those people who got teasing about my physical condition as a joke. At that time I really thought it was something that didn't need to be brought up, because maybe they just wanted to make my friendship and they become closer. However, more and more I realized that my flaws are natural for people to make jokes about. I once had feelings for a man and didn't get anything back because of my physical condition. He acted like I was nothing. Also, from my observations during high school, those who are beautiful get a lot of attention, more respected, and have more opportunities to do many things than us who have a lot of flaws. There is a famous quote that reads "Nobody cares, unless you are dead or pretty." and I totally agree with those quotes. Through the poetry that I wrote, I want people to realize that our people, women who have many flaws, who are imperfect also want to be respected. I want to make people aware that we exist. No need to love, just appreciate our existence is more than enough."

This narrative journal gives her power more than she could face reality. Words are the power in which she can bring back her life as her power. She could adapt to the new context where situation can be handled with more mindful state of mind. By producing poetry, she could show the world that she is unique, different and worth to be heard. Her voice and self-identity is popped out through poetry. This finding is supported by the research of Iida (2016) which found that poetic identity in second language writing is a meaning making in the EFL context. Through poetry, meaning is constructed and produced with value of humanity. Adinna (2017) also found that poetry fosters self-identity and creative writing skills. This is a real-life language experience that the learners found to be able to speak up their minds and voice. This is also relevant to finding of Byrne's research (2015) that poetry is the expression of identity. This is the feeling that is honestly expressed and showed. Titus (2017) also found that poetry stimulates the learners' motivation to learn about culture and context of society.

Poetry 3
In the Mid of Twilight Ember
(Adisaptha)

Your heart is as warm as the November warmth,
The November's ember that is better than last September.
Your soul is made of every will of fires
The will of one soul that won't spit lies
Your hair is what the fire craving for
To be burnt,
To be torn apart,
Till the last part of your flesh of spirit that can never be forgotten,
You are the heart of every sincere prowess,

129

The one oblivion of never have less,
You had questions with time,
You had nonsense dialogue with it
You sit,
You walk,
Yellow, red, you have been through
In the stage that you create,
Of you....
And everything you burn
In the mid of twilight ember.

The linguistic device used here are metaphor and imagery. Metaphor is used as a representation of meaning behind the idea of the poetry. The use of metaphors are found in almost all of the lines. Such as "your soul is made of every will of fires", "your hair is what the fire craving for", "you are the heart of every sincere prowess". They are the representation of meaning in the context of power and strength of Balinese women. Adisaptha said that this is a poetry of reflection which is written as a response of poetry anthology Burning Hair (Piscayanti, 2017). This anthology presents the idea of Balinese women's power in society both in the real life and spiritual life. Adisaptha viewed the anthology is powerful as he could see it as representation of Balinese woman. He found that the poetry is the medium of voice and choice. He supports the idea that poetry is the representation of culture, as stated in his poetry. Adisaptha tried to recall the value of poetry gained from reading poetry anthology and building the context of the poetry based on real life values. He also uses imagery to gain the effect of poetry visual such as seen in "everything you burn in the mid of twilight ember". This poetry presents the action, the colour and visual imagination that provokes our thought.

Narrative Journal 3

"Today in the poetry class I had another chance to have a talk with my other fellow classmates and my lecturer. We talked about how we perceive mindfulness in our life. For me, mindfulness not only helps me get my own "stroke" in writing but it is also guide me on how to act to certain situation in life. This poetry is my response towards Burning Hair anthology by Kadek Sonia Piscayanti. This is a mindful book, provoking book. It talks about strong Balinese women. They are silent yet powerful. They are unseen but felt, heard, and present. Just like burning hair, when the hair is burnt, the heat is there but the power is also there. Why hair? Because hair is the symbol of woman. The elements that last to be burnt in Balinese context. The softest, yet the strongest."

From the narrative journal, it can be seen that poetry is also voice about other voice. It is a response of action, response of culture, response of a context. This goes along with the research done by Davenport and Pagnini (2016) which found that mindfulness practice includes observation, articulation, and presentation of ideas. This could make learners able to respond, analyze, criticize, and construct new values or even make more perspectives of the values.

Stevenson (2020) further notices that mindfulness is framed as an inner intelligence awareness, that is processed within creative process. This goes along with finding by McKay and Walker (2020) who found that mindfulness had a positive link with positive manner, positive character, and positive power. Therefore a mindful learner is a strong character which always comes with positivity, flexibility, and sensitivity, and productivity.

130

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The implementation of mindfulness in EFL poetry classroom stimulates learners to be sensitive, flexible, attentive to context, and productive. The learning process enables the learners to be more engaged and involved to construct their own meaning from which voice and choice are delivered. It can be concluded that, first; mindfulness stimulates the learners to speak their voice and choice; second, the learners can have the ownership of learning from their own perspective, and third; they are the characters who grow as strong, mindful, creative, and productive. The recommendation of this study is to explore more the process of how mindfulness can instill the character building in each level of education especially in language learning context.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

REFERENCES

Adinna, A. (2017). Poetry: Fostering self identity and creative thinking in the efl classroom. *Proceedings of the Fifth International Seminar on English Language and Teaching (ISELT-5)*, 178 - 186. Retrieved from http://ejournal.unp.ac.id/index.php/selt/article/view/8001

Byrne, G. (2015). Narrative inquiry and the problem of representation: 'giving voice', making meaning. *International Journal of Research and Method in Education*, *40*(1), 36–52.

Davenport, C., & Pagnini, F. (2016). Mindful learning: A case study of langerian mindfulness in schools. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *7*(SEP), 1–5. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.01372

Hanauer, D. I. (2012). Meaningful literacy: Writing poetry in the language classroom. *Language Teaching*, *45*(1), 105–115. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444810000522

Hoffman, Th.R. (1993). *Realms of meaning*. Longman Publishing

Langer, E. J. (1989). *Mindfulness*. Merloyd Lawer. http://www.perseusbooksgroup.com

Langer, E. J. (2016). *The power of mindful learning*. Da Capo Press.

Moafian, F., Khoshsima, H., Fadardi, J. S., & Pagnini, F. (2019). Langerian mindfulness and language learning. *Cogent Psychology*, *6*(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/23311908.2019.1609242

Iida, A. (2016). Poetic identity in second language writing: Exploring an EFL learner's study abroad experience. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *2*(1), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.32601/ejal.460985

McKay, T., & Walker, B. R. (2021). Mindfulness, self-compassion and wellbeing. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *168*. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2020.110412

Perinne, L. (1982). *Sound and sense: an introduction to poetry*. Thomas R. Arp. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich

Piscayanti, K.S. (2017) Burning hair. Mahima Institute Indonesia

Piscayanti, K.S. (2020). Pengaruh penerapan mindful learning terhadap kreativitas dan produktivitas mahasiswa dalam pembelajaran poetry di prodi pendidikan bahasa inggris undiksha. Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha.

Piscayanti, K. S. (2021). Cultivating mindful learning in efl poetry class: A way to make creative and productive writers. *International Journal of Research in Education*, *1*(1), 60–74. http://journal.upgris.ac.id/index.php/ijre/article/view/7947

Rejeki, C. S., Yulianti, F., & Kustantinah, I. (2022). The Figurative Language Used In Ayu Meutia's Poetry Tigress Based On Gibbs & Colston's Theory. *Allure Journal*, *2*(1), 26–35.

Sherretz Christine E. (2011). Mindfulness in education. *Journal of Thought, Fall-Winter, 2011*, 79–96.

Stevenson, J. C. et al. (2020). Adult attachment and mindfulness: Examining directionality, causality, and theoretical implications. *Journal of Research in Personality, 90*. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2020.104043

Titus, J. (2017). Using poetry in a foreign language classroom. *International Conference ICT for Language Learning 10th edition*, 476 - 481.

131

Treddinick, M. (2006). *The little red writing book*. UNSW Press.

Wang, Q., Law, H. C., Li, Y., Xu, Z., & Pang, W. (2017). Awareness and awakening: A narrative-oriented inquiry of undergraduate students' development of mindful agency in China. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8(NOV), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.02036

Webster, L., & Mertova, P. (2007). *An introduction to using critical event narrative analysis in research on learning and teaching*. Routledge.

Kadek
Living in My Voice and Choice: A Poetry-Based Mindfulness in EFL Classroom

Piscayanti

| Exclude quotes | Off | Exclude matches | Off |
| Exclude bibliography | On | | |