

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research method applied in this study. It consists of the research design, the data source, the data collection, and the data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

The research design that this study adopted to answer the research questions is a qualitative one. This method is chosen since the findings appear in the form of a text rather than in the form of numbers. A qualitative method is appropriate to be applied in this study since this study explores people's experiences (Hancock, Ockleford & Windrige, 2009).

The most essential feature of a qualitative research is text as the main focus (Kuckartz, 2013). According to Pope, Ziebland and Mays (2000), qualitative research provides a lot of textual data. By using a qualitative method, the way researchers view the function of a text may be different depending on their own goals. In this study, the students' response poems served as the source of data, and the study intended to, first, identify the range of themes emerging from these poems, and, second, to understand how the students make meanings of their classroom experiences as reflected in their response poems.

In determining the themes of the poems, the study particularly highlighted the voice of the poem, the tone and mood, the diction and the figurative language. These poetic devices were also used to understand how the students made sense of their classroom experiences.

3.2 Data Sources

The data of this study were taken from response poems written by twelve fourth-semester students that took Themes in Literature class in an English and Literature program. They were responding to the poem “Did I miss anything?” by Tom Wayman (1994). The response poems revealed the students’ voices and how they felt about their experiences in the classroom.

“Did I miss anything?” is a poem that is told mainly from the teacher’s point of view written in a rather sarcastic tone; it points to how frustrated the teacher is when students repeatedly ask the teacher if they miss anything when they were absent in class. The poem is as follows:

Did I Miss Anything?

*Question frequently asked by students
after missing a class*

Nothing. When we realized you weren’t here
we sat with our hands folded on our desks
in silence, for the full two hours

Everything. I gave an exam worth
40 percent of the grade for this term
and assigned some reading due today
on which I’m about to hand out a quiz
worth 50 percent

Nothing. None of the content of this course
has value or meaning
Take as many days off as you like:
any activities we undertake as a class
I assure you will not matter either to you or me
and are without purpose

Everything. A few minutes after we began last time
a shaft of light suddenly descended and an angel
or other heavenly being appeared
and revealed to us what each woman or man must do
to attain divine wisdom in this life and
the hereafter
This is the last time the class will meet
before we disperse to bring the good news to all people on earth

Nothing. When you are not present
How could something significant occur?

Everything. Contained in this classroom
is a microcosm of human experience
assembled for you to query and examine and ponder
This is not the only place such an opportunity has been
gathered

but it was one place

And you weren't here.

In this poem, each stanza starts with either 'nothing' or 'everything'. These words represent the poem's ever-changing tone. When the stanza starts with 'nothing' the content takes on a sarcastic and humorous tone; meanwhile, when the stanza starts with 'everything' the content seems to express the teacher's anger and exasperation.

Specifically, this poem is about a teacher who is tired of students that always ask the same question whenever they miss class. The aforementioned question is the ever unchanging "Did I miss anything?" which coincidentally is also the title of the poem. The poem then proceeds to start with the teacher sarcastically replying to the inferred question that nothing happened in class and that they wasted two hours of class time in silence. Then the teacher retorted with an angry 'everything' and said that the student missed an exam that is worth almost half of the grade and that there is an assignment due that day that is worth fifty percent.

Afterwards, the teacher says that nothing that is gained in the class is of significant value. That the student is free to skip any number days of class and that they will not get any kind of repercussion. That all lessons and knowledge gained in class is redundant and is no interest to either the student or the teacher. However, in the following stanza the teacher then continues with a rebuttal, the teacher sarcastically says that a holy being descended to the class and proceeds to bless and enlighten the mortals

present of their purpose of being birthed to this world and to deliver and spread the holy blessings to every other mortal that roam the earth.

In the last two stanza the teacher then proclaims that how can anything happen when the student is not present and how in this quaint and small classroom the gateway to knowledge is contained. How the opportunity to dissect said knowledge is lost when the student decides to miss class.

Responding to the teacher's voice above, the students were then invited to share their own perspectives and classroom experiences in the form of a poem.

3.3 Data Collection and Data Analysis

The collection of data took place within the Themes in Literature class. The class is made up of fourth semester university students who were in the English Literature major. While all students in the class had to write a response to the poem 'Did I miss anything?', only twelve were selected as data. The number emerged as the selected poems were written in more than three stanzas. For the data, the poems had to be long enough to reveal the students' thoughts and emotions of their own classroom experiences. Pseudonyms were given to the authors of the twelve response poems. Once the poems were collected, they were then read closely, paying particular attention to the tone and mood, theme and the figurative language in order to understand the students' views regarding their classroom experiences, highlighting the emotional value of the poems.

The next step in the analysis was to 'code' the data. This means to categorize the data into groups. The act of this categorization assisted me to better understand the data in a more systematic and comprehensible way. Each poem was dissected into several columns presented in a table format. The first column contained the student's poems, the second column contained the poem's analysis for the tone. The third column was for the mood of the poem. The fourth column highlighted the analysis on the

figurative language used in the poem. The fifth column will be to present the constructed theme of the poems based the information that has been categorized in the previous columns. During this phase of the analysis, the overall theme and emotion of the poem can be inferred through the analysis of the tone, mood and the figurative language used during the prior analysis phase. Such table helped me to focus on the relevant aspects needed to answer the research questions.

The last and final step was to draw an interpretation on the theme that was constructed during the previous phase of analysis and would be further interpreted using the reader-response theory by Rosenblatt. This phase will be able conclude the students' classroom experience. By using such methods, this study expects to find hints on what the students feel about their experience in the classroom in their poem, whether it be hidden in the tone of the poem or the mood or the figurative language used on the poem. In order to keep the poem's entirety, the poems were analyzed one by one.

Below is an example of how I conducted the poem analysis:

Table 1: Example of Poem Analysis

“Did I Miss Anything” by Tom Wayman	Tone	Mood	Figurative Language(s)	Theme
<p><i>Question frequently asked by students after missing a class</i></p> <p>Nothing. When we realized you weren't here we sat with our hands folded on our desks in silence, for the full two hours</p> <p>Everything. I gave an exam worth 40 percent of the grade for this term</p>	<p>Sarcastic, humorous, caustic, gets less snarky and more serious in the last two stanza.</p>	<p>Anger, exasperation, sarcastic humor</p>	<p>Hyperbole: -we sat with our hands folded on our desks in silence, for the full two hours This hyperbole is to exaggerate that the class just sat quietly for two hours. Realistically speaking, this can't possibly happen.</p> <p>Imagery: -we sat with our hands folded on our desks</p>	<p>A teacher's aguish towards a student who missed class.</p>

<p>and assigned some reading due today on which I'm about to hand out a quiz worth 50 percent</p> <p>Nothing. None of the content of this course has value or meaning Take as many days off as you like: any activities we undertake as a class I assure you will not matter either to you or me and are without purpose</p> <p>Everything. A few minutes after we began last time a shaft of light suddenly descended and an angel or other heavenly being appeared and revealed to us what each woman or man must do to attain divine wisdom in this life and the hereafter This is the last time the class will meet before we disperse to bring the good news to all people on earth</p> <p>Nothing. When you are not present How could something significant occur?</p> <p>Everything. Contained in this classroom is a microcosm of human experience assembled for you to query and examine and ponder This is not the only place such an opportunity has been</p>			<p><i>in silence, for the full two hours</i> This imagery is used to set an image of a class that sits quietly for the whole class time.</p> <p><i>-A few minutes after we began last time a shaft of light suddenly descended and an angel or other heavenly being appeared and revealed to us what each woman or man must do to attain divine wisdom in this life and the hereafter</i> This imagery is used to set an image of a revelation from a holy being to the whole class.</p>	
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gathered				
but it was one place				
And you weren't here				

The poem “Did I Miss Anything?” by Tom Wayman (1994) uses the first-person point of view. The poem starts in a sarcastic tone; however, it still has some humorous vibe as well. It also has a playful tone during the first stanza. In the line, *we sat with our hands folded on our desks in silence, for the full two hours*, hyperbole and imagery are present. The line exaggerated the absence of the student implying in a sarcastic way that the class did nothing during his or her absence. The line also provides the image in an explicit way of how the class just sat still for the duration of the class. Yet, in the next line, the class indicated that in fact it *did* something; they had a test that was worth forty percent of the grade and an assignment that was worth fifty percent of the grade, hence the absent student has missed ninety percent of the total grade. These first two stanza also established the altering pattern of the poem.

The next two stanzas take the sarcasm up a notch and implies some kind of mocking especially in the line, *take as many days off as you like*. In this stanza the teacher is saying in a caustic tone that the class has no value to both the teacher and the student. The poem then continues to rebut the previous stanza by saying a heavenly being descended and gave enlightenment to the people present of their purpose in life and how to achieve peace in the afterlife. This particular stanza is full of the imagery of an apostle and how they usually gain enlightenment.

The last two stanzas take on a more serious tone with the fifth stanza taking on a snarky tone. The following stanza, however, is less snarky and is more serious. It also serves as the conclusion of the poem, and it also highlights the opportunity that the absentee missed. The last two lines breaks off the stanza to create an emphasis for the missed chance to learn and gain new knowledge.