

THE USE OF PICTURE TO IMPROVE THE GRADE EIGHT STUDENTS' ABILITY IN WRITING RECOUNT TEXTS AT MTSN KELAYAN BANJARMASIN OF 2015/2016 ACADEMIC YEAR (PENGUNAAN GAMBAR UNTUK MENINGKATKAN KEMAMPUAN SISWA KELAS VIII DALAM MENULIS TEKS RECOUNT DI MTSN KELAYAN BANJARMASIN TAHUN PELAJARAN 2015/2016)

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Abstract

The Use of Picture to Improve the Grade Eight Students' Ability in Writing Recount Texts at MTsN Kelayan Banjarmasin of 2015/2016 Academic Year. This classroom action research was intended to improve the students' ability in writing recount texts through the use of picture. This study involves 38 grade eight students of MTsN Kelayan Banjarmasin of the 2015/2016 academic year. This study was conducted in two cycles by following the procedures of the action research: planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting. Each cycle of the study encompassed three meetings. The data of the study were gathered through observation checklists, field notes, questionnaire, and writing tasks. The findings of study show that the use of picture can improve the student's writing ability. The improvement could be seen from the increase of the students' average writing score and the number of students who could pass the minimum standard score for writing. Besides, the use of picture can increase the students' participation and motivation during the writing tasks.

Key words: recount text, writing, the use of picture

Abstrak

Penggunaan Gambar Untuk Meningkatkan Kemampuan Siswa Kelas VIII Dalam Menulis Teks Recount Di MTsN Kelayan Banjarmasin Tahun Pelajaran 2015/2016. Penelitian tindakan kelas ini ditujukan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan siswa dalam menulis teks recount melalui penggunaan gambar. Penelitian ini melibatkan 38 siswa kelas VIII MTsN Kelayan Banjarmasin tahun pelajaran 2015/2016. Penelitian ini dilaksanakan dalam dua siklus dengan mengikuti prosedur penelitian tindakan kelas: perencanaan, pelaksanaan, pengamatan, dan refleksi. Setiap siklus terdiri atas tiga pertemuan. Data penelitian dikumpulkan melalui ceklis pengamatan, catatan-catatan lapangan, kuesioner, dan tugas menulis. Temuan-temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan gambar dapat meningkatkan kemampuan menulis siswa. Peningkatan dapat dilihat dari peningkatan nilai rata-rata menulis siswa dan jumlah siswa yang mampu melampaui nilai standar minimal untuk menulis. Selain itu, penggunaan gambar dapat meningkatkan partisipasi dan motivasi siswa selama tugas menulis.

Kata-kata kunci: teks recount, menulis, penggunaan gambar

INTRODUCTION

Writing as one of the four language skills plays an important role in the context of teaching English as a foreign language in Indonesia. Tompkins and Hoskisson (1995:197) state that when people write, they produce their own ideas for others to read. Writing comprises communicating a particular message in the written form (Spratt and William, 2005: 26). To some extent, writing is regarded as the most difficult skill for foreign language learners to master, because it involves several components which need to be considered while the learners are writing, such as content, organization, vocabulary use, grammatical use, and mechanical considerations, like spelling and punctuation (Brown, 2001: 335).

The most important reason for teaching writing, particularly in Indonesian context, is that writing can help students learn because writing will reinforce the grammatical structures, idioms, and vocabulary that the teacher has been teaching to his/her students (Raimes, 1983: 3). Furthermore, when students write, they also have an opportunity to be exploratory with the language, to go further than what they have just learned to say, and also to get involved in the attempt to express ideas with the constant use of eyes, hands, and brain. However, it is not easy to make students write, even only for a single sentence.

There were some problems faced by students in writing. First, they could not determine an appropriate choice of words and word forms to generate the ideas in writing a text which might be caused by their limited experience in using the appropriate choice of words and word forms, even though a topic had been given by the teacher. Second, they could not organize their texts well because of their grammar competence was not sufficient to develop their good writing and their teacher did not apply a certain technique that encourages or guides the students in writing. She just assigned them to write a paragraph without giving a model of a good paragraph organization. Third, they were unmotivated to accomplish every writing task because the instructional media that their teacher used for presenting the materials did not vary.

Referring to the problems and causes above, it is considered necessary to find the best strategy to help the students improve their writing ability and motivate them to participate actively in the writing class. There are many alternative strategies to engage students in writing activities. One of which is the use of pictures as a media for writing. This strategy is expected to overcome the students' problem in writing as well as motivate the students in accomplishing the writing tasks.

The English teacher can employ pictures as their instructional aids in the teaching of writing. Pictures can translate abstract idea into more realistic form and they are inexpensive (Suyanto, 1999: 21). The pictures are appropriate for young learners because they are easy to prepare, easy to organize and interesting to the students. The use of pictures in the teaching and learning process is aimed to make the process of teaching and learning more effective. Wright (1992) explained that pictures could play a role in motivating the students. Pictures can also provide a stimulating focus for students' attention, a variety of task, and a shared experience (Raimes, 1983: 27). From those statements, it is obvious that pictures could be used as media to teach writing especially in helping the students to express the ideas in the written form.

Previous research on the teaching writing by using pictures showed that the students' writing are getting better than before using pictures. Sundari (2002) found that the use of pictures could

facilitate the students to communicate their ideas in the written form correctly in terms of forms and content. Another researcher discovered that the students could minimize the number of errors and mistakes in descriptive paragraphs and their writing could be understood easily by applying many models of pictures (Azhari, 2004). Moreover, Mochtar (2004) conducted the development of picture series for the teaching of writing in Junior High School. She concluded that the students are more active and motivated since there is a brainstorming activity in pre writing by using pictures.

Based on National Curriculum (Kurikulum 2013), Junior High School students have to master a number of texts: narrative, descriptive, recount, procedure and report (Permendikbud No 58 tahun 2014: 47-55). The grade eight students, in particular, have to master descriptive, recount and narrative texts. It is stated further on the Main Competence that the first semester of grade eight students of Junior High School must be able to write simple functional texts and short essays in the forms of descriptive and recount. Therefore, short essays or composition writing is one of writing activities that can be used by the teachers to teach writing (Gebhard, 2000: 226). In writing short essays activity, the teachers teach students how to write short stories related to their past events and description of people, places or object. Likewise, the teaching of writing in Junior High School must be viewed as an ongoing process. It means that teaching writing involves pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing (Hill and Norwick, 1998: 68).

For those reasons above, the researcher would apply pictures to improve students' skill in writing recount text. Anderson & Anderson (2003: 48) stated that a recount is a piece of text that retells past events, usually in the order in which they happened. The purpose of a recount is to give the audience a description of what occurred and when it occurred. A certain picture can help students in finding and generating ideas about what have they seen in it, or relating the picture with something that had happened to their private experience.

Based on the benefits of the use of picture for the teaching and learning of English discussed above, the researcher is interested in applying the use of picture to improve the writing ability of the grade eight students of MTsN Kelayan Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan.

METHOD

This research was designed as a classroom action research since it focused on the teaching and learning activities in the classroom. This Classroom Action Research was intended to improve the writing ability of the students through the use of picture. In implementing the strategy, the researcher was acted as the teacher who taught writing by using picture to the students, while the other teacher was acted as the observer who observed the implementation of the action in the classroom.

The action research followed the cyclical process proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988: 15), which consists of four steps, namely, planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. Planning stage focuses on how to set up a teaching and learning strategy to be used to overcome problems which occur in the class. During the acting stage, the practitioner tries out the strategy. The observation stage includes collecting data on the results of the strategy. Finally, during the reflection stage, conclusions are drawn and the original plan revised based upon the conclusions so that a new cycle can begin.

In planning stage, careful preparation was made before doing the action. In this part, the researcher accomplished the following activities: (a) Designing the procedure of the teaching

technique, (b) Designing lesson plans for writing class, and (c) Determining the criteria of success. The criterion of success of this study was **50% of the students' compositions obtained a final score of 78 in the analytic scoring rubric.**

Meanwhile, in implementing stage, the technique was applied in the teaching and learning process. In this part, the researcher took the role as a practitioner who taught students to write recount texts based on the lesson plan by using the picture, while the other teacher acted as the observer. The implementation of the action was carried out cyclically and based on the lesson plans.

Furthermore, in observing stage, the researcher collected the data by using the research instruments, such as writing tasks, observation checklist, field notes, and questionnaire. The data gained from these instruments were used to confirm whether the criterion of success was achieved or not. Besides, they were also used to identify any aspect of the strategy that needed to be modified in the subsequent plan.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

After the use of picture was implemented and developed within two cycles, it is concluded that the appropriate model of the use of picture in the teaching of writing covers the following procedures: (1) giving the students a model of recount text, (2) having students to read the story and asking them to pay attention to vocabulary and sentence structure or language feature of recount text in the story, (3) asking students some questions to ensure that the students have understood about the story and generic structure of recount text, (4) organizing the students into groups, (5) distributing to each group of students several copies of pictures, (6) assigning each group of student to select and analyze the pictures, (7) assigning the students to find and generate their ideas about what they have seen in the selected picture in group, (8) assigning the students to write their ideas to be a recount text individually, (9) assigning the students to combine the sentences of their text with the appropriate connectors individually, and (10) giving comments and suggestions to the students to revise and edit their drafts.

Furthermore, the implementation of the use of picture in the teaching of writing has successfully improved the grade eight students' ability in writing recount text at MTsN Kelayan Banjarmasin. The improvement could be seen from the increase of students' average writing score from 24.3 in the preliminary study, and 52.1 in the first cycle, to 70.1 in the second cycle. Besides, the finding indicated that the use of picture was effective in motivating and encouraging the students to participate actively in writing a recount text. It was found that there were 73.1% students who gave good responses toward the implementation of the technique in the first cycle and 86.5% students who gave good responses toward the implementation of the technique in the second cycle. In addition, it showed that there were 79.1% students participated actively in the first cycle and 95.1% students participated enthusiastically in the second cycle.

Discussion

The implementation of the use of picture in writing class in this study was inspired and adapted from the technique proposed by Raimes (1983). Raimes categorized the technique as the technique in producing free writing. Thus, the emphasis of writing is that the students should put

content and fluency first. Once ideas are down on the page, grammatical accuracy, organization, and the rest will gradually follow (Raimes, 1983: 7). Meanwhile, in this study, the researcher tried to apply the technique to produce a combination of both the controlled and free writing. Hence, besides the fluency, the researcher also tried to reach the accuracy in writing. It can be seen from the attempt to gain the emphasis on the grammar, vocabulary, and organization aspects besides content aspect.

Moreover, in addition to the use of picture proposed by Raimes which tended to yield writing as a product, the researcher tried to apply the technique to produce writing as a process. The researcher, then, implemented the technique by having prewriting, drafting/writing, revising, and editing activities to the students. She was interested to give time and feedback toward her students' writings (Raimes, 1983: 10).

In revising and editing activities, the teacher-researcher needed to give students practice in checking through their drafts (Harmer, 2004: 106). Thus, in the first cycle, she let her students revise and edit their draft by themselves based on the revising and editing guidelines. Yet, in fact, these kinds of activities had become a new burden for students due to their lack of knowledge in doing so. Because the focus of this study was the improvement of the students' ability in writing, therefore, in the second cycle, the teacher-researcher changed the technique in revising and editing her students' drafts by giving comments and suggestions directly or "ask me" technique (Harmer, 2004: 112). In this case, the teacher-researcher asked the students to talk to her about their problems in writing so that she was able to sort out the problems face-to-face.

Based on the results of the students' final writings, it was found that the students' ability in writing recount texts was gradually improving. It means that there is a positive impact of the use of picture on the improvement of the students' ability in writing recount texts based on certain media such as timetable, and picture series. In other words, the use of the use of picture could increasingly help and motivate them to learn how to write recount texts better. Thus, most of them gradually gained good scores at the end of each cycle. Before the implementation of the use of picture, the average score of the students writing was only 24.3 and no students (0%) got score greater than 78 as the minimum score set for English subject in the researcher's school. In Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 the average and the number of students who got score greater than 78 was improved. The average score in Cycle 1 was 52.1 and the number of students got the upper target score was 4 students (11.4%). In Cycle 2 the average score was 70.1 and the number of students who got the upper target score was 25 students (71.4%).

Beside the improvement of the criteria of success above, there is also improvement in terms of the students' participation during the teaching and learning process. From the result of the observation checklist in both cycle I and II, it was found that there were 79.1% students who participated actively, particularly in the former cycle, and 95.1% students who were enthusiastically involved during the teaching and learning process in the latter one. Conversely, those who passively participated in the first cycle were 20.9% students and those who were involved inactively in the second cycle amounted 4.9% students. This indicated that the students' participation increased 16%. In addition, it showed the increase of the students' motivation in the teaching and learning process of writing.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the research, it can be concluded that the implementation of the use of picture in the teaching of writing has successfully improved the students' ability in writing recount texts. It is indicated by the enhancement of the students' writing score as well as the number of students who achieved the minimum score of 78 based on the Analytic Scoring Rubric. Besides, based on the results of the observation checklist, field notes, and questionnaire, there is improvement of the students' participation during the teaching and learning process by using the use of picture which also indicates the improvement of the students' motivation in accomplishing every writing task during the implementation of the technique toward the grade eight students of MTsN Kelayan Banjarmasin.

After the use of picture was implemented and developed within two cycles, it is concluded that the appropriate model of the use of picture in the teaching of writing covers the following procedures: (1) giving the students a model of recount text, (2) having students to read the story and asking them to pay attention to vocabulary and sentence structure or language feature of recount text in the story, (3) asking students some questions to ensure that the students have understood about the story and generic structure of recount text, (4) organizing the students into groups, (5) distributing to each group of students several copies of pictures, (6) assigning each group of student to select and analyze the pictures, (7) assigning the students to find and generate their ideas about what they have seen in the selected picture in group, (8) assigning the students to write their ideas to be a recount text individually, (9) assigning the students to combine the sentences of their text with the appropriate connectors individually, and (10) giving comments and suggestions to the students to revise and edit their drafts.

Suggestions

There are some suggestions to offer to the English teachers and the future researchers. Based on the research findings and discussion on the effectiveness of the implementation of the use of picture in improving the students' ability in writing recount texts and improving students' motivation in writing class, it is suggested that English teachers implement the picture as an alternative strategy in English instruction of writing which somewhat creates an interesting atmosphere and motivates the students in learning English. Yet, in applying this picture, the teacher should be active in monitoring the students' activities in group discussion and creative in making the teaching and learning process alive so that students will never feel bored.

Moreover, to the future researchers, particularly those who have the same problems and are interested in conducting the use of picture in their research, it is suggested that they apply the use of picture in the same field which is focused on increasing the students' creativity and curiosity in writing (creative writing) or in the teaching of other language skills, for instance listening, speaking, or reading. Students can analyze the picture given, for example, and then describe what they have seen in the picture (speaking skills).

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