

IMPROVING STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN WRITING NARRATIVE TEXT THROUGH PROBLEM BASED LEARNING

NURHANNA SARI SIREGAR

English Department - State University of Medan

ABSTRACT

This study attempted to improve students' achievement in writing narrative text by applying Problem Based Learning technique. This study was conducted by using classroom action research. The subject of this research was the students of VIII science SMP I BARUMUN TENGAH PADANG LAWAS with the total 40 students. The esearches conducted in two cycles consisted of six meetings. The instruments for collecting the date were tests, diary notes, observation sheets, and interview. Based on the date analysis, the mean of the students' score for the orientation test was 51. 52 for test I (cycle 1) was 39. 61 and for test II (cycle 2) was 58. 76. The conclusion is Problem Based Learning technique can improve the students' achievement in writing narrative text.

Keywords: Problem Based Learning, Writing, Narrative Text.

1. Introduction

There are four kinds of language skills supposed to to be acquired by the students: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. These skills are the objectives of teaching and learning English as a foreign language and they are related to one another. The skills themselves cannot be separated because they give contribution to one another. Writing is one of the most infortant skills in language learning. Being able to write is vital skill for speakers of a foreign language as much as for every one using their own first language (Harner, 2004: 3).

Teaching this skill needs a good preparation of the teacher. To reach the nature of teaching such as mentioned above, it is infortant to be aware the

approach of teaching, method of teaching, technique of teaching, and even the material of teaching. It is expected that all of these things are appropriate, interesting, and meaningful for the students.

Writing is part of language skills that important to be taught. In writing the writers inform an idea and message in the written form. The reader can understand experience, event, and histories idea easily. So, need a knowledge and experience. Without having good knowledge in writing. The writer will not be able to convey his/her ideas to the reader.

As Byrne (1979:5) stated that writing is the process of communication that introduces graphic symbols such as word, phrase, and sentence later formed become good paragraph that convey a message to the readers.

In writing activity, the writer has not only to think of the way to say something and selecting words but the writer has consider how to develop idea. To combine sentence and to organize paragraph by paragraph. It means that in a process of writing, the writer need good preparation, prior knowledge, and experiences accurate before writing. It can be say writing in English is considered as the most important part to be learned, especially for the student have to competence in writing.

Writing is actually helpful for the students to learn a language because writing provides many advantages, namely: writing reinforces the grammatical structure, idioms, and vocabulary; writing also enhances the students to venture the language; by writing the students become very involved in the language effort to express their ideas.

Before starting writing, it is necessary to express one experience, when one writes something, for example, when one writes letter especially love letters, who many pieces of letter will be torn when writes it. Many people will tear more than three or four papers just for one single letter and will spend much time to produce a single letter.

According to the Education Unit Orientation Curriculum of junior High School (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pengajaran), for English subject, students are expected to be able to write a simple paragraph of description, recount, narrative, spoof, anecdote, procedure, and etc. One of the writing focuses which must be mastered by students in writing narrative text.

But in reality, most of the students always face problem in writing process. Its' proven when the students can't be able to write a simple text. As Marta (2003) points out in her research findings that among the 40 students, here are only 11 students that can get good score and the other 29 students are unable to write well. As the result the students get bad score in their writing. So they assumed that writing is very difficult to study. It is caused by low prior knowledge in developing idea, using sentence pattern, appropriate word or confusion in expressing their idea.

Based on the writers' experience observation on teaching training, she found that writing narrative text was a serious problem for students. They had difficulty in developing idea. Using sentence pattern and appropriate words and confuse to find out topic. Students' difficulty in writing good composition can be seen from their poor writing. Most of them fall in addressing the assigned topics, repeating idea, writing text without topic sentence, lack of sufficient evidence, no transition between sentence and could not develop and organize

their idea and express it well. Those happen because of less practice or boring method on learning activity. It is true that teaching learning method can influence students' success failure in learning subject.

Therefore, the teacher should be able to present the lesson interesting and create a relevant topic based on the knowledge of the students. So it can motivate the students and increase their curiosity particularly in writing skill. It means that the teacher must emphasize the uses of Problem Based Learning to keep students' interest in writing skill. By using this method, it is expected that the students are able to learn easier and for teachers' it can ease to monitor and observe the process of writing.

Problem based learning is a group of teaching learning process that is focused to the process of problem solving which is based scientifically. It can help students in solving the problem that they often faced in writing. They will solve the problem together in their group and discuss each other so that their ideas and information can develop. Through problem based learning, it is expected that students are able to write especially narrative text.

2. Problem Based Learning

Problem Based Learning is designed in the late 1970s. It is kind of approach that challenges students to learn through engagement in a real problem. Problem Based Learning is students-centered that refers to give relevant opportunities to the students. It will make a fundamental shift from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning. The process in Problem Based Learning is aimed at using the power of authentic problem solving to engage students and enhance their learning and motivation.

Barrow and Tamblyn (1980) in <http://www.c-sap.bhan.ac.uk/resources/project-reports/sow-overview.asp?id=4> states that Problem Based Learning is the learning that results from the process of working toward the understanding or resolution of the problem which is encountered in the first to the students.

Furthermore, Kaufan in <http://www.c-sap.bhan.ac.uk/resources/project-reports/sow-overview.asp?id=4> says that Problem Based Learning is a teaching method that can be used in small group. From the explanation above, it can be concluded that Problem Based Learning is a process of learning that is started with the problem in order to motivate and engage students to study collaboratively.

In Problem Based Learning, the teacher presents to students as a problem solver to work and decide their goal. This does not mean that the teacher gives the authority for making judgments regarding what might be important for students to learn but it will practice students' responsibility and motivate them in learning. The teacher acts as a facilitator and mentor rather than a source of solution.

To do the implementation of the Problem Based Learning, the teacher needs to choose the topics or the materials of the subject which they have a problem and it can be solve. The problem can be taken from the text book or from the other aspect, such as the incident around the environment, the incident in a family or in the social life.

The strategy of Problem Based Learning can be done in the following situation:

- 1) If the teacher wants students not only memorize their lesson, but also to master and understand it well
- 2) If the teacher intends to increase the skill of the students' rational thinking, such as the ability in analyzing a situation, to apply their knowledge in a new situation, to know the difference between the fact and idea, and also increase the ability in making judgment objectively.
- 3) If the teacher wants the students to be able to solve a problem and make a challenge of the students' intelligence
- 4) If the teacher wants to motivate the students to understand the relationship between that they have studied and the reality in their life. (the relationship between theory and reality)

The Characteristic of Problem Based Learning

There are three primary characteristics of Problem Based Learning based on Tan in (M. Taufiq Amir 2008: 22)

1. Problem Based Learning is a set of learning activity

In Problem Based Learning there are some activities that should be done by students. The students are not expected to do traditional habits such as: taking note, listening to the teacher' explanation, remembering the material. The students are expected to think actively, communicate and find the conclusion.

2. All the activities in Problem Based Learning are tended to solve the problem

Problem Based Learning places a problem as a key of learning process. It implies that the learning process is nothing without a problem.

3) Problem Based Learning uses scientific thinking in solving the problem

In solving the problem, the students should think scientifically. Scientific means a process of thinking deductively and inductively. It should be passed by several steps and based on several facts.

2.1.5.2 The Procedure of Problem Based Learning

According to (M. Amir 2008: 24), there are seven steps in Problem Based Learning

1) Clarifying and agreeing on terms and concepts that are unclear

Make sure all of the students understand some concept on the problem. For example: the teacher give the text to the students and then make the students understand about the concept of the problem.

2) Formulating the Problem

It means that the step which the students determine the problem will be solved. The teacher can start a discussion of general topic that relates to daily activities after introduces the general topic, the teacher gives the problem to students. For example: the teacher gives a problem after explain about the characteristics, types, tense and generic structure of narrative text. The teacher gives picture story which contain 15 random pictures to each group. They are asked to put into good order.

3) Analyzing the Problem

It is step which students look at the problem critically. In this step, the students can use their knowledge to analyze or learn the problem specifically. The students should determine the basic problem. They work and discuss in group in group to get clearly about analyzing problem.

For Example: in the second step, the students look and analyze the picture story. They have to find the first picture in the paper and arrange it into good order.

4) Formulating Hypothesis

It is a step which the students formulate some solutions on their knowledge. It is important in Problem Based Learning. The ability of students expected in this step is decision about the causes and effect to solve the problem. For example: the students will formulate the hypothesis about right picture story and the sentence of each picture. They try to combine the sentence into good text.

5) Collecting Data

It is step which the students look for and draw information that they need to solve the problem. The students have to collect and choose the relevant data about the topic. Those processes are not just imagination but based on experience. The data will support in solving the problem.

For example: the students have to find the data or information from other sources to get the clear concept of their text. The sources are books, notes or teacher explanation. Then, the students should determine the generic structure, tense and types of text.

6) Evaluating the Hypothesis

It means that a step which the students take or formulate a conclusion based on the sentences or the fail of the hypothesis. The students should evaluate the result or conclusion of their project correctly in order to get the best result.

For example: after the students get the conclusion of their project such as : giving a good order of picture story and narrative text, the generic structure, types and the tense, they evaluate in to get the best result.

7) Formulating the Recommendation of Problem Solving

Here, the students draw the recommendation which can be done based on the formulation of the evaluating of the hypothesis result.

For example: the students will apply the activities in the previous step. So, after they evaluate and get the new idea or recommendation, they will apply to their project result.

The advantages of Problem Based Learning

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- ❖ Student center. Problem Based Learning foster active learning, improved understanding and retention and development of life long learning skills.
- ❖ Integration, Problem Based Learning facilitates and integrate core curriculum
- ❖ Motivation, Problem Based Learning is fun for students and tutors and the process requires all students to be engaged in the learning process
- ❖ Generic Competencies, Problem Based Learning allows students to develop generic skills and attitudes in their future practice.
- ❖ Deep Learning, Problem Based Learning foster deep learning (students interact with the learning, relate concept to everyday activities, and improve their understanding)
- ❖ Constructivist approach. Students activate prior knowledge and builds on existing conceptual knowledge frameworks.

2. Writing

According to Brown (2001: 337) said that writing is a way to end up thinking something you could not have started our thinking. Bell and Burnady as quoted by Nunan (1989:36) states that writing is an extremely complex cognitive in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously at the sentences level those in clued control of context, format sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and letter formation.

Beyond the sentence, the writer must be able to structure and integrate information into cohesive and coherent paragraph.

Writing is one of the language skills. In modern life, writing is very important because it is known that all knowledge is built on writing. Keith (1980:269) states that writing is related to human consciousness and it is the ability to use the structure, lexical items and conventional representation in ordinary matter of facts of writing. In addition, D'angelo (1977) explains that writing is a thinking process in which setting ideas and arranging the ideas in an orderly fashion are closely connected.

Based on the quotations above, it can be assumed that writing is a process of putting thoughts and ideas in words into a sequence of words, combining sentences in the form of a paragraph in which every sentence is related to another semantically. In addition, writing should be organized effectively and include aspects such as words choice, grammar, mechanics, and contents or evidences.

3. Narrative Text

The means of reading is written text. There are so many kinds of text, and one of them is narrative. Narrative text is defined as literature written primarily to tell a story. Good narrative literature, which establishes or develops a conflict, addresses common aspects of human existence.

Narrative is not simply about entertaining the reader even though it generally does so. Narrative is also a powerful medium for changing social opinions, attitudes, and some soap operas and television drama as narrative to raise

topic issue and present their complexities and different perspectives in ways that are not possible in news reports and current affair program. Formally, narrative sequences people/characters in time and place.

Generic Structure of Narrative Text

According to Pardiyono there are four elements of structure of Narrative, they are :

1. Orientation is consists of the topic of an activity or event which is told.
2. Sequence of events consists of some conflicts, which happen.
3. Resolution is the text element consists of the problem solving.
4. Coda is a simple conclusion which consists of moral lesson for the reader.

Language Features of Narrative Text

According to McKeugh, Palmer, Jervey, and Bird (2007) that narrative features are:

- 1) Sequentiality. Story events occur in a squence, linked by connecting words such as *and, then, because, and but*).
- 2) Particularity. Stories are about something in particular; extraneous events that do not relate to this particular something should not be included in the story.
- 3) International states. Story characters' actions are motivated by their intentions (i.e., goals, desires, wants, and needs). Canonicity and breach. In stories, the

expected order of things (i.e., the canon) is breached, thus situating the story character in dilemma.

4. Findings

The result indicated there was an improvement on the students' writing narrative text achievement through problem based learning technique. It was supported by the fact that the mean of the score in every test increased. The mean in the orientation test was 51.52, the mean of the test I(cycle I) was 39.61 and the mean of the test II(cycle 2) was 58.76.

The qualitative data were taken from interview sheets, diary notes, questionnaire and observation sheets which showed that students' participation in this study increased from meeting to meeting. Based on the interview, the students admitted that their English teacher had never used problem based learning technique in teaching writing skill especially in writing narrative text. These data described the students' attention, enthusiastic responses and the participation was good during the research process.

Conclusion

After analysis the data, it was found out that the students' score increased from the first cycle to the second cycle. The mean of the students' score in test I was 39.61 then it was improved in test II become 58.76. It means that the mean of the students' score from the test improved 15.19. From the data it can be concluded that problem based learning technique can help students' achievement in writing narrative text.

It was also found that the students no longer have difficulties in writing narrative text since problem based learning technique can help them in narrative writing. The technique help them to elaborate the ideas to write about the topic they want to write. By using problem based learning technique, the students finally found that writing narrative text is not so difficult as they taught and even it can be fun because the technique help them to share and elaborate ideas. Therefore, it can be concluded that problem based learning technique can improve students 'achievement in writing narrative text.

Suggestions

The result of this study shows that the use problem based learning technique in writing skill can improve the students' achievement in writing narrative. These following suggestion are offered:

- a. To English teacher, it is better to use the problem based learning technique in teaching writing skill to the students because it will be easier for the students to write a text, especially a narrative text. This technique makes the students share ideas in a group and elaborate the ideas into writing individually.
- b. To the students, it is suggested to practice writing more often by using problem based learning technique since it can improve the students' achievement in narrative writing.
- c. To all the readers, this research will bring them to good understanding of writing the narrative text because by using this technique people will not get stuck in writing narrative text. They will always know what to write since the technique allow them to share ideas.

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