

DEVELOPING WRITING SKILL THROUGH JOURNALS

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Abstract

This research was aimed at developing the use of journals can develop the ability of the eleventh grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Sojol in writing Recount text. It was a pre-experimental research design. The sample was 30 students of the eleventh grade students. The instrument of data collection was a test which was administered twice called pre-test and post-test. The result of the data analysis showed that the t_{counted} value (14.3) was higher than t_{table} value (2.045) by applying 0.05 level of significance and the degree of freedom (df) 29. It means that the application of journals can develop the ability of the eleventh grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Sojol in writing Recount text.

Keywords: Writing Skill; Recount Text; Journals.

INTRODUCTION

Writing is another way of communication and interaction that takes place between writers and readers. It is a way of people to tell about events, stories or problem to other people through a written language based on their minds and ideas. In these recent years, writing takes an important role as another way of communication. It is a very complex cognitive activity that demands concentration to choose and to control a number of elements simultaneously. Goldman and Hirsch (1986:XI) point out that “Writing is clearly a complicated activity that requires intense concentration”. It is a process which is made up of many different components. They are content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics.

Learners can master the other three language skills if they master writing skill. Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983:149) state “Writing should reinforce and help extend the listening, speaking and reading abilities”. Based on the statement, we can conclude that writing can support the other language skills. As one of the productive skills in language, writing also carries the same importance in social interaction as other skills do.

Recount is a kind of writing text given in the learning experience to meet the expectation of using the language in social communication. In teaching a language,

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learning experiences are given to students to enable them to convey their thoughts and ideas clearly. It is stated in the KTSP that recount is included in teaching writing in order to be able to communicate through the language.

In fact, the language use (simple past tense) and the organization (generic structure) often makes students confused, especially for the eleventh grade students of senior high school. They usually have some problems when they learn about Recount text. Firstly, they get difficulties to change infinitive verb into past tense, especially irregular verbs. Secondly, they get confused about time conjunctions.

By looking at the statement above, it shows that Indonesian students do not know that in English, there are verbs formed in infinitive or in past tense, and the time conjunctions. Therefore, the writer needs a medium which allows them to know how construct a good sentence in simple past tense and construct the sentences into a good paragraph. The writer wanted to try to use journal as a medium to explain Recount text to minimize the students' problems in writing Recount text.

Journal is a written record of what you have done each day. Journal is specifically considered supportive in developing recount writing because of the characteristics they have. Journal and recount are the same in retelling past experience, which means both of them share the same features of the use of past tense and time conjunctions. The use of journals is also suggested by Hamp-Lyons and Heasley (1987:6): "We strongly suggest that in addition to completing the task on study writing, you also keep your own personal journal". Moreover, journal writing is considered appropriate since the students are basically asked to write about experiences of their own, their daily activities, or any interesting occurrences that are of their interests. It implies the easy and comfortable activities of journaling and every one will be interested and excited about the idea of writing on topics they know well. The writer realizes that journals is one of the appropriate media in teaching writing recount text.

Since Indonesian students feel confused about how to write recount text using Simple past tense and time conjunctions, the writer formulated her problem statement in following question *Can the use of journals develop the eleventh grade students' ability at SMA Negeri 1 Sojol in writing Recount text?* It is to know that the use of journals can develop the eleventh grade students' ability at SMA Negeri 1 Sojol in writing Recount text.

METHODOLOGY

In this research, the writer applied pre-experimental research design. The writer conducted the research based on the research design recommended by Nazir (2003: 231) as follows:

O₁ X O₂

Where:

O₁: Pengukuran awal (pre-test)

X: Perlakuan (treatment)

O₂: Pengukuran akhir (posttest)

The population of this research was the eleventh grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Sojol consisting of 62 students. The writer chose sample by using cluster sampling technique. The sample of this research was XI Science 1 consisting of 30 students. Based on the title, there were two variables of this research. Best (1981:59) states “Variables are the condition or characteristics the experimenter manipulates, controls, or observes”. Referring to the title of this research, the writer found out two variables. They were dependent and independent variables. The independent variable is the use of journal and the dependent variable is developing writing skill.

In conducting this research, the writer used test. Before conducting treatment to the students, the writer administered pre-test to the students. she had designed the pre-test into two forms. They were sentence construction and writing paragraph. The information about scoring system was presented in the following table:

Table 1: Scoring System

Classification	Score	Criteria
Compositional organization	3	• Overall shape and internal pattern clear. Organization skills adequately controlled.
	2	• Some organization skills in evidence, but not adequately controlled.
	1	• Very little organization of content. Underlying structure not sufficiently controlled.
	0	• No apparent organization of content.
Grammar	3	• Almost no grammatical inaccuracies.
	2	• Some grammatical inaccuracies.
	1	• Frequent grammatical inaccuracies.
	0	• Almost all grammatical inaccuracies.

Adopted from Weigle (2009)

After giving the pre-test, the writer gave the treatment by using journals as the medium to the experimental group for eight meetings. The meeting was held based on the school schedule and each meeting took 90 or 2x45 minutes.

After conducting the experimental teaching (treatment), the next step that should be done by the writer was giving the post-test. The aim at doing post-test was to prove that the treatment was effective or not by comparing the result of pretest and posttest. The test had the same form as the test in pre-test which means the instruction and the question was alike. To analyze the result of both pre-test and post-test, the writer used statistical analysis in order to get the final result.

As stated above, the writer analyzed the data by using statistical analysis. It was used to know the result of pre-test and post-test. Then, the writer calculated the individual score by using formula which was recommended by Arikunto (2002:276):

$$\Sigma = \frac{X}{N} \times 100$$

Where:

Σ = standard score

X = sum of correct answer

N = maximum score

100 = fixed score

After the writer obtained the standard score, she counted the mean score of the class. To get the mean score, she used a formula proposed by Sudijono (1998:77):

$$M = \frac{\Sigma X}{N}$$

Where:

M = mean score

ΣX = obtained score

N = number of students

Then, the writer counted mean deviation by using formula proposed by Arikunto (2006:307):

$$Md = \frac{\Sigma d}{N}$$

Where:

Md = mean from post-test and pre-test

Σd = total score of deviation

N = number of students

After that, the writer computed the square deviation by using formula which is recommended by Arikunto (2006:307) as follows:

$$\sum x^2 d = \sum d^2 - \frac{(\sum d)^2}{N}$$

Where:

$\sum x^2 d$ = sum of squared deviation

N = number of students

To find out the effect of treatment, the writer used a formula proposed by Arikunto (2002:275):

$$t = \frac{Md}{\sqrt{\frac{\sum x^2 d}{N(N-1)}}}$$

where:

t = t-test score

Md = mean from post-test and pre-test

$\sum x^2 d$ = sum of squared deviation

N = number of students

RESULTS

Having noted the pre-test, the writer counted the mean score of the students by applying formula which was proposed previously in methodology. The writer added all the standard score and divided by the number of the students. the mean computation was as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} M_{pre} &= \frac{\sum X}{N} \\ &= \frac{1365.6}{30} \\ &= 45.52 \end{aligned}$$

By looking at the result above, the writer found that the result of pre-test was surprising because none of the students got the maximum score. The highest score was 8 and the lowest was 3. The mean score of pre-test was 45.52. From the score got by the students, it can be concluded that the ability of the eleventh grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Sojol in writing recount text was in medium level.

The presentation of test result can be seen in the following table:

Table 2: Pre-test Scores

No	Initials	Scores of each item of the test		Obtained Score (0-12)	Maximum Score (12)	Standard Score (0-100)
		Sentence Construction	Writing Paragraph			
1	AH	4	1	5	12	41.6
2	D	1	2	3	12	25
3	Dr	5	3	8	12	66.6
4	DA	2	1	3	12	25
5	F	2	2	4	12	33.3
6	G	1	2	3	12	25
7	HK	1	2	3	12	25
8	H	2	2	4	12	33.3
9	Hr	4	2	6	12	50
10	I	4	4	8	12	66.6
11	It	6	1	7	12	58.3
12	IA	6	2	8	12	66.6
13	K	3	2	5	12	41.6
14	M	1	2	3	12	25
15	MI	1	2	3	12	25
16	MA	6	2	8	12	66.6
17	Md	6	2	8	12	66.6
18	MR	2	2	4	12	33.3
19	Ms	5	2	7	12	58.3
20	N	3	1	4	12	33.3
21	Nf	2	2	4	12	33.3
22	RD	2	1	3	12	25
23	RF	6	2	8	12	66.6
24	R	2	2	4	12	33.3
25	SM	6	2	8	12	66.6
26	SI	5	2	7	12	58.3
27	SW	3	5	8	12	66.6
28	W	5	2	7	12	58.3
29	Ww	6	2	8	12	66.6
30	LL	1	2	3	12	25
Total Score				174	-	1365.6

After computing the students mean score in pre-test, the writer totaled the students mean score in post-test. The formula design used was the same as in pre-test.

$$\begin{aligned}
 M_{\text{post}} &= \frac{\sum X}{N} \\
 &= \frac{2532.1}{30} = 84.4
 \end{aligned}$$

The result presentation of the post-test can be seen in the following table:

Table 3: Posttest Scores

No	Initials	Scores of each item of the test		Obtained Score (0-12)	Maximum Score (12)	Standard Score (0-100)
		Sentence Construction	Writing Paragraph			
1	AH	6	4	10	12	83.3
2	D	4	5	9	12	75
3	Dr	6	5	11	12	91.6
4	DA	5	4	9	12	75
5	F	6	4	10	12	83.3
6	G	6	4	10	12	83.3
7	HK	5	4	9	12	75
8	H	4	4	8	12	66.6
9	Hr	6	4	10	12	83.3
10	I	6	5	11	12	91.6
11	It	5	5	10	12	83.3
12	IA	6	4	10	12	83.3
13	K	5	5	10	12	83.3
14	M	6	4	10	12	83.3
15	MI	6	5	11	12	91.6
16	MA	5	5	10	12	83.3
17	Md	6	5	11	12	91.6
18	MR	5	4	9	12	75
19	Ms	6	5	11	12	91.6
20	N	6	4	10	12	83.3
21	Nf	6	5	11	12	91.6
22	RD	6	4	10	12	83.3
23	RF	6	4	10	12	83.3
24	R	5	5	10	12	83.3
25	SM	6	4	10	12	83.3
26	Sl	6	5	11	12	91.6
27	SW	6	5	11	12	91.6
28	W	6	5	11	12	91.6
29	Ww	6	5	11	12	91.6
30	LL	6	4	10	12	83.3
Total Score				304	-	2532.1

The result of the computation of post-test obviously showed that there was a progress which made difference between the students' mean score in pre-test and in post-test. The students' mean score in pre-test was 45.52 lower than the students' mean score in post-test 84.4. It proved that the students' achievements in the post-test or after treatment was increased.

After calculating the mean score of the students' pre-test and post-test, the writer computed the deviation and the square deviation of the students score in pre-test and in post-test. The computation of the students' mean deviation was presented as the following:

$$\begin{aligned} Md &= \frac{\sum d}{N} \\ &= \frac{1166.5}{30} \\ &= 38.8 \end{aligned}$$

Having counted the mean deviation, the writer then calculated the square deviation which was presented below:

$$\begin{aligned} \sum x^2 d &= \sum d^2 - \frac{(\sum d)^2}{N} \\ &= 52055.1 - \frac{(1166.5)^2}{30} \\ &= 52055.1 - \frac{1360722.2}{30} \\ &= 52055.1 - 45357.4 \\ &= 6697.7 \end{aligned}$$

Moreover, the writer needed to analyze statistically the data in order to know the difference between pre-test and post-test. The computation was as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} t &= \frac{Md}{\sqrt{\frac{\sum x^2 d}{N(N-1)}}} \\ &= \frac{38.8}{\sqrt{\frac{6697.7}{30(30-1)}}} \\ &= \frac{38.8}{\sqrt{\frac{6697.7}{870}}} \\ &= \frac{38.8}{\sqrt{7.6}} \\ &= \frac{38.8}{2.7} \\ &= 14.3 \end{aligned}$$

After analyzing the data of the test, the writer found the result of the data analysis showed that the t_{counted} was 14.3 by applying 0.05 level of significance with the degree of freedom (df) 30 ($N-1=30-1=29$). The writer found that the t_{counted} (14.3) was higher than t_{table} (2.045). It could be concluded that the research hypothesis was accepted. In other words, the application of journals can develop the ability of the eleventh grade students in writing recount text.

DISCUSSION

Based on the result of students' pre-test, it can be seen that none of the students got the highest score. It was surprising because the students have learnt the material in tenth grade about Recount text. All students got score lower than 12. 30% students got the highest score, 8 points and 27% students got the lowest score, 3 points. It happened because when they got the pre-test, they got confused about the question in test and they did not know well about Recount text.

The writer found that some of the students were still confused to change infinitive verbs into past verbs especially irregular verbs. It was difficult for the students because they have different forms, for example *bring* becomes *brought*. The students also confused how to use time conjunction in sentences. Those mistakes indicated that the problem was they did not know well how to change infinitive verbs into past verbs and how to use time conjunctions.

After conducting the treatment, the writer gave post-test. She found that by using journals as a medium, the students could know about past tense and time conjunctions even though they did not get the highest score. There were 34% students got the highest score, 11 points and 3% students got the lowest score, 8 points. By looking at the students' mean score from pre-test to post-test, the writer found a good progress resulted by the application of journals in teaching recount text.

By comparing the result of pre-test and post-test, the writer concluded that the use of journals as a medium in teaching writing recount text was effective because there was a progress in students' score.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

After analyzing the data, the writer draws some conclusions. Firstly, the use of journal is effective in developing the students' ability in writing recount text. It can be seen from the result of the data analysis, in the pre-test the result was 45.52 while in the post-test the result increased to 84.4. Obviously, it indicated that the ability of the eleventh grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Sojol in writing Recount text was developed. Secondly, there was a significant difference between the mean values of pre-test and post-test. It was proved since t_{counted} value (14.3) was higher than t_{table} value (2.045). It means that the research hypothesis was accepted.

Referring to the importance of writing especially Recount text, the writer would like to offer some suggestions for the readers. Firstly, in teaching writing, the teachers should

provide a good medium which students feel much comfortable when they are asked to write in English. Secondly, teachers should encourage students to practice their writing with familiar topics that are near with the students' life and activities. Thirdly, the teachers must provide the students with more media which can support the materials given, such as text, or dictionary. Finally, the appropriate media can hold an important role to achieve the objective of the teaching and learning process itself.

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