EFFECTS OF POP CULTURE FOR IMPROVING STUDENT- TEACHERS' WRITING SKILL
(A CASE STUDY AT GALUH UNIVERSITY)

Ratnawati

(ratnawatienglisheducation@yahoo.com)

English Department of Galuh University

ABSTRACT

Writing, one of the four skills which have to be taught by educators in language learning. Starting from classroom observation implied that students confronted the difficulties in writing involving generating ideas, organizing words, and making compositions. This study supposes to explore some effects of pop culture as authentic materials for English language teaching in improving students' writing skill. Due to pop culture relates to students' life and experience, it is considered to be a stimulus for gaining students' ideas, information, motivation, and interest in teaching writing. The students of secondary school were involved in this study and descriptive case study was employed to observe the importance of pop culture in writing class. Also, questionnaires and students' works are the instruments to measure its effects. Both students' works and result of the questionnaires pointed out that significantly improvement obtained after applying pop culture. In line with findings, it can be said that pop cultures have significant effects toward students' writing skill. So, educators need to apply pop culture as their choices in future planning lesson.

Key words: Pop culture, Writing skill, Descriptive qualitative

INTRODUCTION

Teaching writing is very useful for learners in composing good text. In contrast, it is considered to be the most difficult skill has to be taught and learnt. Writing is a productive skill that has to be learnt by students, but it is generally as the most difficult of the four skills (Paul, 2003). Many facts found that secondary students in Indonesia faced difficulties in writing: generating ideas, improving the ideas into good sentences, and composing sentences into good texts (Novitarini, 2009). Then, Niu and Sternberg (2001) cited in Cheung (2009) found that in a study comparing creativity of Chinese and American undergraduate students, found that Chinese students were less creative in writing. Turkish students' writing indicates there is no critical thinking and individual voices on their writings (Alagozlu, 2010).

In writing class, educators need high efforts to create interesting classroom settings, authentic materials,

and selecting straightforward strategies or techniques in order to invent students' motivation. Classroom setting can influence teachers and students' interactions which bring class alive. (Harmer, 1998). More, selecting materials were chosen by educators punctiliously because it is the main elements of influencing students' motivation. Peacock (1997) asserted authentic materials motivate learners because they are intrinsically more interesting or stimulating than artificial or non-authentic materials (by which I mean materials produced specifically for language learners, e.g. exercises found in course books and supplementary materials). (Based on the Biggs (2000) cited in Cheung (2001) claimed that students are only motivated to learn things that are important and meaningful to them. It is indicated that students generally possess high motivation when they perceive teaching and learning process is related to their life, useful for their daily needs, and beneficial for their future. Those situations can be reached after resorting materials, conditions, and strategies or techniques for teaching, in this case is teaching writing.

From previous exploration confirmed that those difficulties and significances influence students in teaching and learning writing. Thoughtfully, those difficulties need to be eliminated by taking decision is building on the above consideration. This paper emphasizes to describe the effect of authentic materials of popular culture used in teaching writing for the secondary students' level.

Pop Culture, Authentic Materials, and Teaching Writing

Pop culture is renowned as popular culture. Many linguists declare some perceptions toward this term. It is about ideas, perspectives, attitudes, and other phenomena in a particular society that is well known and popular to most ordinary people in that society and it can influence a society and civilization without improving it (Assemi, Zadeh, Assayesh, Janfaza, and Abbasi, 2012). It is effective for authentic materials in teaching and learning process because they connect to students' life and beneficial for life and education. As it is asserted by Cheung (2001) found that popular culture create an environment in learning. Dolby (2003) cited in Jamison (2007) stated that popular culture is embedded in daily living , reaching into neighborhood, homes, cars, and classroom; and influencing what is purchased, worn, listened to, watched, talked, thought about .

Also, applying popular culture as the examples of the lesson will be easy for students in learning process. Due to students enhance popular culture from some resources, so, teachers or educators have to bring it in the classroom. The few previous studies expressed that any teacher who has supplemented his or her curriculum with music, film, or other popular culture texts can surely attest great effect for teaching (William, 2009), Further, teacher prefers current popular ones, because they are superior in relevance to learners' lives here and now as well as in display of easy but realistic, ready-to-use language. These

materials include best-selling essays/stories, TV news-magazines, talk shows, etc. (Hwang, 2005). This study decided to take music for the authentic materials for teaching students.

Further, many writers assumed that popular culture can be used as authentic materials because of meanings for students themselves. It is reflect students' backgrounds, interests, and experiences, teachers are attempting to contextualize their instruction within the students' lives and provide literacy instruction using the very materials their students will engage with as they live those lives. (Jacobson, Degener, Gates, 2003). In addition, authentic materials in the classroom therefore are stretches of real language, produced by real speakers or writers for real audiences and designed to convey real messages of some sort. Authentic materials are not invented pieces for instructional purposes but rather texts produced for communication purposes in real-life situations. (Maroko, 2010). Authentic materials are usually defined as those which have been produced for purposes other than to teach language. They can be culled from many different sources: video clips, recordings of authentic interactions, extracts from television, radio and newspapers, signs, maps and charts, photographs and pictures, timetables and schedules." Nunan (1988) cited in Ngai (2007). Use of authentic materials to encourage writing: newspaper articles, research reports, web-based documents, or public service publications relevant to students' lives (Stearn and Reid, 2004)

Oshima and Hogue (2006) said that writing is a progressive activity; it means that when we first write something down, we have already been thinking about what we are going to say and how we are going to say it. Then, after we have finished writing, we read over what we have written and make changes and corrections." Writing is an effortful and complex activity. In order to manage the many constraints, writers need to organize the cognitive activities involved in writing (Keift, Rijlaarsam, Bergh, 2006). Writing is integral to the student experience of learning in higher education. (Ellis, Taylor, Drury, 2005). Based on the definition above, it can be said that writing is progressive activities that expressing ideas into written form; it is not a natural skill; it needs to be learnt and practiced in order to achieve good writing. Avoiding disambiguates in deciding good text in writing class, teachers have to learn about it. Boardman and Frydenberg (2004) write that good aspects are mechanics, coherence, cohesion, unity, and completeness. Teaching writing cannot be apart from writing process for achieving expected text. It involves generating ideas, developing and organizing the ideas, and revising and editing them (Cross curricular approaches, 2009).

Another paradigm also clarified that writing process have to pass several steps; pre writing, planning (outlining), writing the first draft, writing the second draft, revising the second draft, and writing the final

draft. (Oshima and Hongue, 2006). Since writing is an important aspect in a language teaching and learning, teacher should continue developing some techniques in teaching writing that can help students to improve and master their writing ability (Maulana, 2008). Mandal (2009) proposed that some techniques can be applied in teaching writing such as; writing strategy, summarization, collaborative writing, specific product goals, word processing, sentence combining, and buzz groups. All of those techniques/strategies and others can be applied in writing class depend on the class and students condition.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive case study was employed in this study. Merriem (1988) expressed that it presents a detailed account of the phenomenon under study usually focus on innovative program and practices in education. From this definition, it can be said that this design was applied by researchers for describing a case related to education. The preliminary observation was done before applying treatment to students. Students perceived writing in English is very complicated. Then, students also did not get idea, students face difficulties in connecting between one sentences and others and they do not make sense between one sentence and others.

Starting from this point, doing changes is the bracing action for saving teaching and learning setting. Planning lesson as the first step, the materials were changed by using Pop culture:

popular picture as authentic materials. Doing treatment for students by using popular culture is considered as the further action. The popular culture here is Korean artists as the authentic materials. Recently, Korean artists are the popular in the world involving Indonesia. Korean artists become current issues within two years. Due to its popularity, many countries do temptation to metamorphose TV show which is provided movie with Korean artists. Most Indonesian such as; children, youngsters, teenagers, adolescent, and adult know them well. Moreover, writing process proposed by Oshima and Hongue (2006) is the part of materials for teaching writing to the students. Avoiding students' misperception, guiding them how to write well through prewriting to writing the final draft was also done. At the end of the lesson, project was delivered for students.

Third, students were divided in pairs. Around five boy and girl Korean artists which are popular in Indonesia are used as the theme for the project. From those topics, the pair group selected one of the most favorable artists in his or her group. So, each group has one object to be described. After getting one of the favorable people, students collect idea as much as possible. Next, outlining process develops idea into sentences and they are developed into paragraph. Revising is done together in group. Both Teachers' role and other students are giving suggestions, comments, and feedback by checking each group. Further, writing one step ahead by

adding some information, completing punctuation, connecting conjunctions are the duty of each group. Also, editing together with teacher and other students were employed.

Finally, the final draft compiled by participants and the presentation of each group had. In this session, teachers can assess students' performance through pronunciation, unity, clarity, coherence, content, and cohesive. There is significant improvement happens in students' writing. Based on their writings, it seems more informative than previous writing. The vocabularies used also varieties. Highlighting the assumption, since they are interested in the topic that had to be written, so they have big eager for searching what is fix words for their writing. Punctuation, coherence, and cohesive also improved well because there are revising steps so that they can revise together and learn together.

Teaching and learning process has been accomplished, questionnaires gave to students. The questionnaires is closed questionnaires and there is three options; a, b, and c. Based on the Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) writes that closed questions prescribe the range of responses from which the respondent may choose. Highly structured, close questions are useful in this study because they can generate frequencies influenced to further treatment and analysis. It can be assumed that closed questionnaire is one of the instruments of collecting data in research by choosing the answers available. This questionnaire is used to obtain some information about their interest and opinion of using popular culture,

especially popular music as the authentic material for teaching writing. It consist of eight questions that had to be answered by crossing the choices a, b, or c. The result shown most participants gave positive perspectives toward changes which indicated interest, enjoyment, comfortable, and fun.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

All of the students' writings were found that they were better than the previous research. The writings from students achieved good aspects of writing. The writings hang together between one sentence and others. Jumping from the topic is infrequently found in students' writings. Also, mechanic, grammar, and conjunctions seemed to be not problematic of students' writings. Assuming is that the process of revision and students' motivation influence this result.

The revision process stimulated students to learn and share together about the appropriate use of those aspects. The motivation is influential for students in learning process. In the preliminary study, researcher also applied the same process, but students were reluctant to share, gave comments, and revised others. In contrast, the second parts dealt with students with high motivation so that they can be active, participate totally, and gave comment as they had in the revising process. The latter case happens because authentic materials applied in this process. They feel familiar, close to their life, have more information about topic, and want to know more about topic that was being learnt.

CONCLUSION

Writing is important skill to be learnt by students. The purpose of teaching writing is encouraging students to creating good text. In contrast, writing is the most difficult skill to be developed in order to create good text. Considering the fact, teacher need to apply some strategies, ways, authentic materials, or innovative program in teaching writing so that students are interested and make them easily in constructing text. The result of the students' writings improve significantly after applying authentic materials of popular culture and the result of questionnaire also expressed that students' interest, comfortable, and motivation develop apparently. It can be said that popular culture as the authentic materials have crucial effect for students writing skill.

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About author:

Ratnawati, M.Pd. is a lecturer of English Department of Galuh University