IMPROVING STUDENTS’ WRITING SKILL OF RECOUNT TEXT THROUGH DIARYWRITING

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Abstract
This research investigated the students’ writing skill on Recount Text at Session 2016 A English Department of STKIP PGRI West Sumatera. Some of them had difficulties in organization, content, grammar, mechanic, and vocabulary. Then, they really need lecturers’ guidance in every step of their writing process. Therefore, the independent writing should be applied in each part of their writing process. As consequence, the researcher applied Diary Writing as the focus of research to solve this problem. The purpose was to find whether Diary Writing can improve students’ writing skill on Recount Text. The method of research is a classroom action research (CAR). This research was conducted in one cycle, which has six meetings. Researcher used writing test, observation checklist, and field note, as the instruments. The findings of the research showed that the students’ writing skill of Recount Text improved through Diary Writing. The implications related to this research, the lecturers are suggested to use Diary Writing to help students to be independent and creative writer and for the next researcher to use Diary Writing in others kinds of texts.

Keywords: Diary, Recount, Text, Writing

INTRODUCTION

The knowledge around writing skill has been developed by some experts. However, each of them has different point of view in defining it. The researcher will discuss about the term of writing before explaining about writing skill. According to Hamp-Lyson in O’ Malley and Pierce (1996) writing as an individual act which is the writer takes ideas and transforms them into self-style. From the theory, writing is defined as an individual behavior that has a specific purpose which the writer takes ideas and transforms them into their own topic and style. Further, Nunan (2003) states that writing is a mental work of inventing, expressing, and organizing ideas in a paragraph in order to be clear for the reader. In the theory, writing is defined as the process of thinking which are involved inventing the interesting ideas, expressing the ideas in words, and organizing
ideas in paragraphs to become a good order based on the writing skill project to be understandable by the reader.

Furthermore, Meyers (2005) states that writing is a process of discovering, organizing, and putting ideas on paper, reshaping, and revising it. In the theory, writing is defined as a process of doing something dealing with problem and difficulty in discovering interesting ideas, organizing and putting them on paper that is appropriate with the writing project. Then, the writing skill product should be reshaped and revised to make it better and understandable by the reader.

Moreover, according to Oshima and Ann (2007) writing is defined as some steps of action that involved thinking of ideas, transferring them into words, and reviewing until satisfied that the writing expresses exactly what the writer wants to say to the reader. In this definition, Oshima and Ann have opinion that writing as a continuation action involved thinking and transferring ideas into words and reviewing them to make it satisfied to be read and express writer ideas exactly.

Based on those definitions, the researcher concludes that writing is some steps of mental action of inventing, organizing, reviewing, editing and revising ideas into words by writer own style with specific purpose to be clear for the reader until the writer satisfied that his writing expresses exactly what he want to say.

The term of writing skill is really important in order to boundary how far the writing ability can be categorized as the skill. According to Brown (2001) writing skill is an ability to write naturally, coherently, grammatically, fluently, authentically and purposively. In this definition, Brown states that writing skill as an ability of writer to write with fluent, as natural as possible with the accuracy of grammar, the coherent and authentic ideas and has clear purpose of writing and reader in mind. Moreover, Hedge (2007) defines writing skill as an ability in using some strategies to manage the writing process. In this definition, Hedge states that the writing strategies are number of activities such as planning goals, generating ideas, organizing information, selecting appropriate word, making a draft, reviewing, editing and revising it.

Furthermore, Amato and Patricia (2003) define writing skill as ability to use some strategies for dealing with the problems in writing process. In this
definition, Amato and Patricia have opinion that some strategies such as brainstorming for topic, collecting information for writing the draft, clustering the information, writing the rough draft, consulting with peer or lecturer, and revising it. Based on those definitions, the researcher concludes that writing skill is an ability of writer to write with fluency, as natural as possible with the accuracy of grammar, the coherent and authentic ideas, clear purpose of writing and reader in mind, and using some strategies for dealing with the problems in writing process in order to get the best writing product.

In fact, based on the observation, interview, and result of students’ writing, the researcher found that a number of students at session 2016 A English Department of STKIP PGRI West Sumatera do not have a good ability of writing Recount Text. It can be seen from their low grade of writing. The researcher found that the mean score of students’ writing skill on Recount Text only 62 from the maximum score 100. It was counted by using analytical scale for Recount Text modified from Sarah.

Recount text is a text that tells about events occurred in the past. It is one of texts that help students to develop their experience into writing. According to Wardiman (2005:115) Recount Text is used to tell past events, such as holiday experience, accidents, and activity report. It seems similar with anecdote, but anecdote is used to tell events that are funny and entertaining. Meanwhile, Knapp and Knapp (2005:223) state that Recount Text is the simplyiest text type which tells sequence of events with generic structure such as orientation, events and reorientation. Indeed, it is impossible to tell a story unless we show characters set up in a particular time and place.

Next, Corbett and Julia (2011:49) state that Recount Text is one of the easier non-fiction types which focus on telling what happened. The differences with Narrative Text that narrative is imaginative and made up, when Recount Text should be retelling series of events that have actually happened: in the first person it is a personal recount, and in the third person it is recounting events that have happened to others. In conclusion, Recount Text is a text that tell experience or past event to the reader. Recount text can be in the form of dialogues and written
This text helps students to increase their writing achievement by telling events in the past.

A part of students do not understand those principles of Recount Text and how to develop ideas in writing Recount Text. It happens because they do not have enough basic skill of writing principles and less allocation time for writing. As the consequence, students’ writing skill does not meet expectations for quality. Those students’ problems of writing make them difficult to produce a good writing project. However, students actually can do a better writing if they are taught by an appropriate teaching writing technique. Some lecturers usually tend to use product oriented approach rather that process oriented approach. Actually, students can be more motivated if the lecturer gives them an occasion to be more active, creative, expressive, reactive, reflective, responsible and autonomous through process oriented approach such as Diary Writing.

According to Bolton (2001:11) diary is one of the oldest forms of literature in the west that contain stories of happenings, hopes and fears about what might happen, memories, thoughts and ideas, and all the writer’s feelings. From this definition, we got the point that the writer can write all their feelings about their future and past stories or hopes in diary. It is suitable to be used in writing activity to develop students’ ideas in writing process. Further, Fitzpatrick (2005: 4) states that a diary is a personal record of a writer’s life experience and is usually private. By writing diary, the students can explore and develop their ideas from real life experience, so that they are trained to be sensitive writer who can get the inspiration to be written from whatever happened in their real life. It helps students to solve their problems in getting and developing ideas especially in writing Recount Text.

Furthermore, there are some experts talks about the benefits of diary writing. Harmer (2007: 128) states some benefits of diary writing are: (1) Value of reflection; a diary provides an opportunity for students to think about what happened and how something happened in their real life. (2) Freedom of expression; diary writing allows students to express their feelings freely, because they express it in written form. They can write about daily life activity, love story,
or a special event. (3) Developing writing skills; diary writing contributes to the students’ writing skill improvement such as writing fluency. Their writing fluency will improve since they write regularly.

There are some researchers who have studied about the use of Diary Writing to improve students’ writing skill. Yulianti in her research entitled “Improving the Writing Skills through Diary Writing of the Tenth Grade Students of SMAN 1 Ngemplak”. She conducted the research by Classroom Action Research (CAR). She implemented diary writing as a medium to improve the writing skills of the tenth grade students of SMA N 1 Ngemplak in the academic year of 2013/2014. She founds that there were improvements on the students’ writing skills in the five aspects, namely the content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. Therefore, the hypothesis of “Diary writing can improve the writing skills of the tenth grade students of SMA N 1 Ngemplak is accepted.

Then, Hanan, etc in their research entitled “The Effect of Diary Writing on EFL Students’ Writing and Language Abilities”. They implemented diary writing for 14 weeks as a medium to improve the writing skills in the College of Basic Education, in the English Department. It was conducted in Fall 2014/2015 on two Advanced Writing classes. The analysis of the data obtained showed that the students’ language abilities significantly improved especially in grammar and vocabulary. The students also reported their satisfaction in the free-writing method which allowed them to learn more on self-expression and organization of ideas.

The previous researches above are similar to the research that the researcher conducts to improve students’ writing skill of Recount Text by Diary Writing. The difference of this research from previous researches is in the specific genre of text which is Recount Text. The first and second researcher did research for writing skill in general without specification of genre text. The aim of this research is to find out what extent Diary Writing improves students’ writing skill of Recount Text at session 2016 A English Department of STKIP PGRI West Sumatera.
METHODS

This research investigated the students’ writing skill on Recount Text. Therefore, the method of research is a Classroom Action Research (CAR) since the researcher intended to improve students’ writing skill on Recount Text through Diary Writing. This research was conducted in one cycle, which has six meetings. The researcher was helped by two collaborators. Researcher used writing test, observation checklist, and field note, as the instruments. The participants of this study were students at session 2016 A English Department of STKIP PGRI West Sumatera. The data collections were done as follows: first, the researcher did action research in one cycle which consisted of four steps. They were planning, action, observation, and reflection. Second, the researcher conducted writing test of Recount Text at the end of the first cycle in order to see students’ progress in writing. Later, the data would be analyzed by using analytical rubrics from Sarah that has been modified.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The Extent to Which Diary Writing Improve Students’ Writing Skill of Recount Text

The researcher analyzed the quantitative data which involved the mean score of students’ writing test on Recount Text before treatment and after treatment of Diary Writing in first cycle. The mean score was gotten from two collaborators who scored the test. It involved the indicators of writing skill such as organization (generic structure), content, grammar, mechanic and vocabulary. After analyzing the data, the researcher found that there was an improvement of the students’ writing skill on Recount Text through the process of Diary Writing. The grade from two collaborators as the scorer can be seen below:

Table 1 Mean Scores of Students’ Writing Skill on Recount Text before Treatment and after First Cycle Test from Two Scorers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Before Treatment</th>
<th>First Cycle Test</th>
<th>Improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Generic structure</td>
<td>66.3</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Here is the following diagram of students’ writing skill on Recount Text before treatment and after first cycle test.

**Graph 1. Mean Scores of Students’ Writing Skill on Recount Text before Treatment and after Cycle I from Two Scorers**

To see the improvement of students’ writing skill on Recount Text before treatment and after first cycle test, so here is the following pie of improvement that is shown below:

**Pie Chart. 1 Improvement of Students’ Writing Skill on Recount Text before treatment and after Cycle I**
The improvement of generic structure on students’ writing skill of Recount Text from 66.3 to 70.5 was caused by Diary Writing done by the students. Each of them wrote diary about their real life by using format of generic structure of Recount text such as orientation, events and reorientation continually. Thus, it helped them to improve their skill in writing generic structure of Recount text. Further, the improvement of content on students’ Recount Text from 64.5 to 70.1 was influenced by their training to develop ideas in diary writing from real life events, hopes or wishes. Then, the development of grammar from 60.5 to 70.7 was influenced by students’ self-evaluation on their Diary Writing. When writing it continually about three weeks, they saw their mistakes in grammar every day, so that they tried to improve it for the next day. It helped them to be more understood about the grammar or language features of Recount Text. Those processes also happened when students corrected mechanical and vocabulary so that there were improvement of mechanic from 63.3 to 68.5 and vocabulary from 65.5 to 72.3. Finally, the developments of students’ mean score of Recount Text from 63.3 to 70.4.

This research implies that Diary Writing could solve some students’ problems including organization of the text, content, grammar, mechanic, and vocabulary in writing Recount Text session 2016 A English Department STKIP PGRI West Sumatera. The students were given big opportunity to write Recount Text through Diary Writing continually. It is also related to active learning. According to Watkins (2007: 69-102) in active learning, students became active reading because they did five indicators such as: (1) scanning; students scanned their Recount Text, (2) questioning; students questioned to lecturer about their Recount Text, (3) reading; students read their Recount Text carefully, (4) reviewing; students reviewed their Recount Text, (5) recollecting; students recollected their ideas to improve Recount Text.

Further, the students also became active writing because they did four indicators such as: (1) planning; students planned their Recount Text that would be written in diary through pre writing every day, (2) ideas development; students developed their ideas through drafting, (3) reader’s opinion; students got reader’s
opinion from their peer, (4) reflecting; students revise their text by reflecting from their peer’s mistakes. Those are some advantages of Diary Writing which can improve students’ writing skill of Recount Text at session 2016 A English Department STKIP PGRI West Sumatera and help students become active learner.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion of students’ writing skill by applying Diary Writing during one cycle of Classroom Action Research (CAR), it can be concluded that the use of Diary Writing improve students’ writing skill better at session 2016 A English Department STKIP PGRI West Sumatera. The findings show that all of the indicators of writing Recount Text including organization, content, grammar, mechanic, and vocabulary get progress in one cycle of the research. In accordance with the findings of research, the suggestion can be given for the lecturer to help students improving their writing skill by using Diary Writing. For next researcher, it is suggested to improve students’ writing skill through Diary Writing in others kinds of text.

REFERENCES


