THEUSE OF PEN PAL PROJECT TO TEACH WRITING SKILL OF RECOUNT TEXT TO THE TENTH GRADE STUDENTS OF SMAN 1 TRENGGALEK

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Abstrak

Menulis adalah salah satu keterampilan yang sangat penting di zaman sekarang karena bahasa Inggris telah digunakan dalam banyak sektor. Lebih jauh lagi, menulis dianggap sebagai keterampilan yang paling sulit diantari keterampilan lain untuk dikuasai. Kosakata yang sedikit, kurangnya pengetahuan pada tata bahasa dan kekacauan dalam structure teks menjadi beberapa alasan yang membuat siswa takut untuk menulis. Terlebih, siswa mudah merasa bosan ketika menulis karena mereka beranggapan bahwa tidak ada sesuatu yang menyenangkan ketika mereka belajar menulis. Dari beberapa alasan tersebut, sangat penting bagi guru untuk menggunakan strategi mengajar yang tepat. Siswa dapat berkomunikasi dengan Bahasa Inggris secara efektif dengan bertukar surat. Sahabat pena merupakan istilah bagi seseorang yang bertukar surat untuk berteman dengan orang lain. Surat menyurat dapat memberikan sesuatu untuk dibaca dan juga ditulis karena siswa juga harus menulis balasan surat.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui implementasi dari penggunaan surat menyurat untuk mengajar keterampilan menulis teks recount untuk siswa kelas sepuluh. Disamping itu, penelitian ini juga berguna untuk mengetahui respon siswa terhadap strategi pembelajaran tersebut setelah pelaksanaan surat menyurat dengan sahabat pena. Penelitian ini menggunakan deskriptif kualitatif. Subjek dalam penelitian dalam studi ini adalah siswa kelas X-IIS 2 SMAN 1 Trenggalek. Peneliti menggunakan lembar observasi untuk mengamati pelaksanaan surat meyurat dengan sahabat pena. Hal ini berguna untuk mengetahui yang terjadi dalam keseluruhan proses belajar dan mengajar. Selain itu, untuk mengetahui respon dari siswa, peneliti membagikan lembar kuesioner kepada 32 siswa.

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa surat menyurat dengan sahabat pena bisa menarik keinginan siswa untuk belajar menulis khususnya menulis teks recount. Hal ini di buktikan siswa aktif selama proses belajar mengajar. Sebagai tambahan, guru juga menerapkan penggunaan surat menyurat dalam pengajaran menulis recount teks dengan baik. Guru menggunakan enam sintak dalam Kurikulum 2013 sebagai pusat dari Project Based Learning. Selain itu, guru juga membimbing siswa dengan baik sesuai dengan teory dari Brown dan Hood (1989). Hasil penelitian ini juga menunjukkan bahwa dalam pengajaran menulis teks recount melalui bertukar surat dengan sahabat pena mendapat tangapan positif dari siswa. Kebosanan siswa dalam menulis dapat dikurangi. Siswa juga setuju bahwa teknik ini membantu mereka dalam meningkatkan kemampuan mereka dalam menulis.

Dari hasil dan analisis, dapat disimpulkan bahwa surat menyurat dengan sahabat pena dapat menjadi strategi mengajar yang efektif dalam pengajaran dan pembelajaran menulis terutama dalam teks recount. Strategi ini dapat meningkatkan kemampuan bahasa Inggris mereka dan memotivasi siswa untuk menjadi penulis yang lebih baik. Akhirnya, penulis berharap penyelesaian penelitian ini akan bermanfaat bagi siswa, guru bahasa Inggris, dan peneliti lainnya.

Kata Kunci: *ketrampilan menulis, surat menyurat, bertukar surat*.

Abstract

Writing is one of the important language skills in this era because it used in many fields of life. Moreover, writing is known to be one of the most difficult skills to be mastered. It is because of the students affraidness and

confuseness in delivered their thoughts in written form. Lack of vocabulary, less understanding about grammar and confusion about the structure of the text may became some reasons that make the students are afraid to write. Moreover, students are easily get bored when they write because they often feel that there is no a lot of fun activity while they are write. From those reason it is very important for the teacher to use appropriate teaching strategy. Students can communicate with English effectively trough exchanging letter. Pen pal is the term of people who exchange letters with another's to make friends with someone else. Pen pal can provide the students something to read and also something to write because thay also have to write the repply for their pal.

This study aimed to find out the implementation of using pen pal project to teach writing recount texts to the tenth grade students. Besides that, it also used to find out the students' responses towards the implementation of pen pal project in teaching writing of recount text. The study used descriptive qualitative research. The subject of the study was the students of X-IIS 2 class of SMAN 1 Trenggalek. The researcher used observation sheets to observe the implementation of pen pal. It was used to know what happened in whole teaching and learning process. Besides, to know the students' responses, the researcher distributed questionnaire sheets to 32 students.

The study showed that pen pal project could attract students' willingness in learning to write especially writing recount text. It was proved by the students were very active and enthusiastic during the teaching and learning processes. In addition, the teacher also implemented well toward the use of pen pal project in teaching writing recount text. The teacher used six syntaxes in 2013 Curriculum as the focus of Project Based Learning. Moreover, the teacher also guided the students to write in very good way based on the theory from Brown and Hood (1989). The finding also showed that teaching writing of recount text involving pen pal exchange letter gets a positive response from the students. The students' boredom in writing could be reduced. The students agreed that the teaching strategy could help them to improve their writing abilities.

From the results and the analysis, it can be concluded that pen pal project can be an effective teaching strategy in the teaching and learning of writing especially recount texts. It can improve their English proficiency and motivates them to be a better writer. Finally, writer expected that the completion of this study will be useful for the students, English teachers, and other researchers.

Keywords: *Writing skill, Pen Pal, Letter Exchange.*

INTRODUCTION

Teaching English is emphasized on the four language skills: reading, listening, writing, and speaking. In order to learn English successfully, learners should master language components, namely, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation.

Among the four skills of English, writing is known to be one of the most difficult skill to be mastered. It is in line with Byrne (1988), he stated that writing is difficult activity for most people, both in the mother tongue and in a foreign language. The lack of vocabulary, less of understanding about grammar, and their confusion about the stucture of the text are some reason that makes the students afraid in writing.

The other reason is the students' less capability in aranging the idea when the students construct their writing in full text. This issue can be caused of internal and external factors. Even writing can be one of the most enjoyable and satisfying activities for teachers and students to do together in a classroom, yet it also to be one of the more 'difficult' things to tackle on sylabus. The students often see writing as boring, hard work, unrewarding, and perhaps because writing is often given

out as a homework actvity, there is not a lot of fun (Hadfield and Hadfield, 2005). Most of teachers are more interested to train the students in traditional ways. Usually, the teachers only give some theories on how to make good writing without any practice of writing to the students. Furthermore, the students only know about the theories in making good writing, but the students do not know how to express their ideas and thoughts in writing form. It does not help the students to master the language in the long term. Therefore, they do not know how to arrange words into a good sentences.

Considering to those problems, which are; the students' terrified, less motivation, and teachers' ways in teaching, it is very important for the teacher to apply the best way to teach writing recount text. Teacher should consider to an appropriate ways in teaching and learning process.

The simple way to make the students use to write in English is by using letter. Exchanging letter with the other will provide them with something to read then to write down a reply with the letter they have received before. 'Pen Pal' is the term of the activity of exchanging letters to another to make friends with someone. Traditional pen pal can be a very good way to motivate

students to write. It is different with mouse-pal or key-pal which is done via e-mail. Traditional pen pal was done via letter in a piece of paper. It can be a unique activity for the students because students were accostumed with the use of e-mail in their gadget in this era. In this letter, students shares the information about themselves and their interest. The use of pen pal can motivate the students' willing in writing in amusing ways. This strategy has been widely used at different formal educational settings; it has been used with participants of all group ages and language proficiency levels (Larotta and Serrano, 2012).

Writing letters to pen pal allows students to share their interests with their pen pals. A study that had been conducted by Vera Mello (1998) give evidence that pen pal project was effective way to help the learners to improve their writing skill. The finding shows that this project gives the learners improving their reading, writing and cognitive skills, i.e. a skill to interact with others. The project also gives them a chance to communicate effectively in English to express their ideas and thoughts on a certain topic they liked. By considering the result of the study above, it can be suggested that pen pal project be implemented to tenth graders, because they have to increase their ability in writing and they can be motivated in making their own text.

Pen pal project will become an alternative way to increase motivation for regular writing activities. There are many advantages in using pen pals. As explained by Walker-Dalhouse, Sanders, and Dalhouse (in Larrotta and Serrano, 2012) that pen pal writing can provide valuable learning experiences for students even though it does not involve direct instruction in writing. Pen Pal project can provide students with language skills and social skills. Through pen pal letter exchanges ESL students learn more than just writing in English; they learn the different functions of the language, grammar, vocabulary, idioms, and culture.

From the previous background, the writer is interested to introduce *The Use of Pen Pal Project to Teach Writing Skill on Recount Text to the Tenth Grade Students*. The researcher formulated two research questions as follow:

a. How does the teacher implement the Pen Pal Project in the teaching and learning process of writing skill of a recount text to the tenth graders?
b. How are the students' responses toward the Pen Pal Project to teach writing of a recount text?

The study was held in SMAN 1 Trenggalek. It is used to know how the teacher implement the use of Pen Pal Project in teaching writing recount text. This study also used to find out the students' responses toward the use of Pen Pal Project to teach writing recount text.

Writing

Manchón (2011) proposed that writing is a purposeful and communicative activity which responds to other people and other texts. Furthermore, Meyers (2005) stated that writing is an action-process of organizing ideas, putting in written form, and revising. In other words, writing has to be coherent and cohesive where the ideas in writing should make sense and be connected logically. We can interpret from Meyer's statement that learning writing needs more steps.

The Process of Writing

Brown and Hood (1989), stated that there are three steps in making good writing, they are preparing to write, drafting and revising. Those steps depends on who you are writing to, why you are writing, what you are writing about, where you are, how much time you have, what you feel, etc. In this study, the researcher use Brown and Hood's concept. The steps are:

1. **Preparing to Write**
   Preparing to write is the first step to start writing. Once students are ready to write, they need clear instructions and resources to complete the next steps in the process. In this steps including brainstorming, asking about 'wh' questions related to the topic that have been chosen. In addition, marking points to mention in reply is also important if the writer wants to reply the letter.

2. **Drafting**
   Drafting is the step where the writer really begins to write. In this stage, the writer starts to write after planning their ideas and decide which idea that will be written. It is not the time the writer worry about spelling, grammar, punctuation or the best wording. For some people, getting started is the difficult step although they have prepared to write. The writer must keeping going to get ideas on writing.

3. **Revising**
   The last step is revising. In this stage the writer should check that what the writer have been wrote is in clear and appropriate way. It is not only checking the spelling, punctuation, and grammar, but also arranging, changing, adding, and so on. The writer has to ask someone else to read and discuss with the writer.

The Purpose of Writing

According to Kane (1988), he stated that the various effects a writer may wish to have on his or her readers—to inform, to persuade, to entertain—result in different kinds of prose. In other word, Abbot, et al (1981) stated that the function of writing is to communicate with other who the addressee is at a distance and cannot be spoken to each other. He also stated that the function of the communication is to tell, explain, entertain, and inform about something. Here, the writer have to determine first what is his/her purpose in writing to help the writer in selecting the most appropriate grammar, vocabulary, language in writing related to that function. In addition, Hedge (2005) stated that the purpose of writing is to give some information from someone we cannot presently talk to through some description or story. Thus, writing can be a tool for communication.

The Elements of Writing

Yakhontova (2003) stated that there are three aspects in writing; they are orthographic, grammatical, and stylistic. In addition, Heaton (1990) stated that there are five general components in writing; they are language use, mechanical skills, treatment of content, stylistic skills, and judgment skills. The fifth of those elements has purpose to give an excellent result for writing. Students have to know how to arrange the composition with good rule and it expected to the students of mastering writing skill. Brown (2001) stated that there are some aspects of writing; they are content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanic.

Recount text

Based on 2013 Curriculum, recount text is a kind of text dealing with the experiences happened in the past and focuses on a sequence of events related to the event happened, which the purpose of this text is to informing or entertaining the reader. In addition, Gerot and Wignell (1994) explained that recount is a kind of text to retell past events to informing or entertaining readers.

There are some types of recount text. Based on Derewianka (1990), there are three types of recount text; they are personal recount text, factual recount text, and imaginative recount text.

1. Personal Recount Text

Personal recount tells about activities where the writer or speaker got involved or acted in the event by her or himself. The examples are daily funny incidents, entries of diary, etc. It uses the first pronouns (I, we). Personal responses to the events can be included, particularly at the end.

2. Factual Recount Text

Factual recount records the particular incident (e.g. report of science experiment, police report, news report, historical account). This type uses third person pronouns (he, she, it, and they). The emphasis is on using language that is precise, factual and detail, so that the reader gains a complete plot of the event or experience.

Details are usually selected to help the reader reconstruct the activity in the incident accurately. Sometimes the ending of the story describes the outcomes of the activity happened (e.g. science experiment). Details of time, place and manner may need to be precisely stated (e.g. at 3:15 p.m., between Greenstar street, the man drove at 70 km/h).

3. Imaginative Recount Text

Imaginative or literary recounts is use to entertain the reader by recreating the events of an imaginary world. Specific details, emotive language, and first person narration are use to give the writing impact.

From three types of recount text above the focus of the research is personal recount text since it retells the activities whereas the writer or speaker got involved or acted in the event by her or himself. It is in line with the syllabus on K-13 curriculum that the students must be able to understand and write their own recount text which retells their experiences or daily events.

Teaching Writing

Writing is one of the most difficult skill for students. The difficulty lies not only in generating and organizing ideas, but translating the ideas into readable text also become a reason. The skills involved in writing are highly complex. It means that a students was expected to develop their ability for writing and also the teacher tend to teach the way or the rule correctly.

Raimes (1983) proposed that there are three main reason why writing could help the students to learn. First, writing reinforces the grammatical structures, vocabulary, and idioms that the teacher have been teaching the students. Second, when the students write, they also have a chance to say what they have just learned. Third, when the students write, they necessarily become very involved with the new language.

Furthermore, Harmer (2004) stated that there are several reasons why the teacher should

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teach writing. The reasons are reinforcement, language development, learning style, and writing as a skill. Moreover, the several reasons will be presented as follows:

a. Reinforcement

The visual demonstration of language construction is important and it is used as an aid to commit the new language to memory.

b. Language development

It seems that the actual process of writing helps the students to learn in order to construct proper written texts is all part of the ongoing learning experience.

c. Writing as a skill

The important reason for teaching writing is because it is one of basic language skill. It seems as important as speaking, listening, and reading. In this case, students need to know how to write letters, how to put written reports together, and how to reply to advertisements.

In addition, Hamer also proposed some tasks which teachers have to complete before, during, and after student writing, those are:

1. Demonstrating

Students need to be aware not only of writing conventions, but also genre constraints in specific types of writing. Teacher have to be able to draw these features to the students' attention.

2. Motivating and provoking

Students often find themselves 'lost for words'. In this phase, the teacher can help and provoking the students to have ideas, enthusing the students with the value of the task, and persuading the students that writing can be very fun activity.

3. Supporting

Teacher needs to always supporting the students when the students writing in the class. the teacher also helps the students overcome the difficulties.

4. Responding

When responding, the teacher should react to the content and construction then make suggestion for its improvement.

5. Evaluating

When evaluating the students' writing for test purposes, the teacher can indicate where the students wrote well and where the students made mistakes. When the teacher want to make some marks of the corrections or errors,

it is better to put them in the right, rather than put it on the back of the students' tasks.

Based on the explanation above, it is very important for the teacher, especially English teacher, to understand not only the rules in teaching writing, but also the way how to motivate the students in writing. Teachers, as facilitators, must be well-prepared to teach students in front of the class. Then, teachers give interesting things to support students learning activities, especially when teachers teach writing. Here, an appropriate way in teaching learning process is needed. One of the effective way in teaching writing is using pen pal project.

Pen Pal

Harmer (2007) stated that pen pal is the person who sends letters to (and receives letters from) people to establish the connection. It is called *mouse-pals* or *key-pals* when done via the internet. While, traditionally pen pal is done via letters. Supporting the explanations above, Guth (in Larrotta and Serrano, 2012) explained that pen pals can be from local or from very far away, and exchanges can include group letters or individual letters.

There are many advantages in using pen pals. As explained by Walker-Dalhouse, Sanders, and Dalhouse (in Larrotta and Serrano, 2012) that pen pal writing can provide valuable learning experiences for students. It can provide students with not only language skills, but also social skills. Through pen pal letter exchanges ESL students learn more than just writing in English; they learn the different functions of the language, grammar, vocabulary, idioms, and culture.

The Implementation of Pen Pal Project to Teach Writing Skill of Recount Text in 2013 Curriculum

In this pen pal project, two students exchange letters about any topics in terms of recount text. Letter writing can be an activity between two students. Moreover, to teach writing successfully, especially writing recount text, the teacher should give much attention toward students' interest, what they want, how they feel, and what the target of the teaching and learning process based on the curriculum.

In 2013 Cirriculum, it uses Project Based Learning . In the Project Based Learning in 2013 Curriculum, there are six syntaxes. They are: (1) Making Essential Questions, (2) Designing a Plan for the Project, (3) Creating a Schedule, (4) Monitoring the Students and the Progress of the Project, (5)

Assessing the Outcome, (6) Evaluating the Experiences.

In 'Making Essential Questions', the teaching and learning process begin with an essential question. This question can be from the teacher or the students or both. This essential question is the focus of Project Based Learning. The second stage, designing a plan for the project, the teacher and the students make a plan for the project to solve the problem in the first stage. This plan contain of the rule of activity to solve the project. The third stage is creating a schedule. The teacher and the students make the schedule of the activity for the project resolution.the activity can be; (a) making the timeline for the project, (b) making the deadline for the project resolution,, (c) guiding the students to have new planning, (d) guiding the students when they make planning unrelated with the project, (e) asking the students to give the reason about their plan. The fourth stage is monitoring the students and the progress of the project. The teachers are responsible to monitor the students during the project. The fifth stage is assessing the outcome. This stage will be done after the students do the project. Outcome used to help the teacher to measure the achievement of the standard competency, to know the students progress, to give feedback about the students' understanding, and to help the teacher in determining the next teaching strategy. The last stage is evaluating the experience. In the end of teaching and learning process the teacher and the students do reflection about the activity in the project. The students express their feeling and their experience during the project. In other words, in this stage the students present their product.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was descriptive-qualitative study which was designed to describe the observed phenomena with words rather than with numbers. The subject of this study were the students of X-IIS 2 class of SMAN 1 Trenggalek. The researcher chose them as the subject because tenth grade students are taught recount text in the second semester based on the government curricula. In addition, they were continuing to develop a social sense and greatly influenced by their peers.

The instrument used by the researcher to get the data were observation sheets and questionnaire. Observation sheet used to find out the whole teaching and learning process. The researcher observed how the teacher implements pen pal project, how the students learnt and discussed, how the teacher managed the class

and the students response toward the use of pen pal project in teaching and learning process. The observation sheet were available in all meetings. The researcher acted as non-participant observer because in descriptive-qualitative study the researcher was not involved in the teaching and learning process. Then, the researcher collected the data from the questionnaire to know the students' responses toward the implementation of pen pal.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Result

The researcher did the observation at the tenth grade students of SMAN 1 Trenggalek. In the first meeting the teacher explained about recount text. After that, the teacher gave an example of recount text. She asked the students to read the text, and then analyzed the structure of the text. These were the part of controlled activity which was done by the teacher.

After the students reading and discussing the text and they had clearly understood about recount text, the teacher gave a game to stimulate the students' ability in making past tense. Three of students came in front of the class, they must build the story about the students' experience in the past time. Then, the teacher gave an assignment to the students. The students were asked to read an unstructured recount text and they had to arrange it. These were the part of semi-controlled activity that was done by the teacher.

Next, the teacher introduced pen pal to the students. The teacher explained what pen pal is to the students and what they must do in pen pal. The teacher gave two examples of the letters. The students read the letter then analyzed contain of the letter. The teacher also gave brief explanation about the structure of the letter and how to make a letter. The teacher also gave ten topics to the students in order to make the students easier to determine what they wanted to write to their pal.

In the second meeting the teacher applied the whole writing process. While in the pre-writing activities students went through brainstorming, writing first draft, editing, and peer-correcting. Whilst-writing was where the students wrote the letter and post-writing was the publication step where the letter was sent to the pen pal. The teacher also walked around the class to see if anyone needed her help when the students found any difficulties.

In the third meeting the teacher distributed the student's draft after the teacher did teacher-correction. The teacher then asked the students to revise their letter. After that, the teacher asked them to write their final letter in a piece of paper. The teacher helped the students whether they still confused with the correction. The

teacher also motivated the students to feel free keep writing to the pen pal anytime they wanted to after the project in the classroom is over.

The result of the questionnaire showed that students enjoyed learning English using pen pal. The teaching strategy which was used by the teacher can motivate the students to write. thay said that the topic given by the teacher also suited with with their daily life, so it helped them to determine what they wanted to write.

Discussion

The teacher used pen pal project to teach writing recount text. The researcher found that the students mostly got difficulties in finding the ideas about what they want to write. It was helped by the teacher by giving some possible topics to the students related to their daily life. From ten topics given by the teacher, they are: (1) Met the stars, (2) Vacation, (3) Music concert, (4) Went to cinema, (5) Birthday party, (6) Unpredictable experience, (7) Bad day, (8) Terrible accident, (9) Unforgettable moment, (10) Disgraceful moment, the most favorite topic that had been chosen by the students was vacation. More than half of the students in class chose vacation as their topic in the letter. In addition, the students also got difficulties in translation. The teacher asked another student to help their friends in translation. The students were allowed to use their dictionary. When the problem not been resolved, then the teacher helped the students.

However, in the teaching and learning process the teacher have to perform demonstrating, motivating and provoking, supporting, responding and evaluating before, during and after student writing (Hamer, 2004).

From the observation, the researcher can say that the teacher did the syntax of Project Based Learning. The teacher led the students in making essential questions, designing a Plan for the Project, and creating a Schedule in the first meeting. In the second meeting, the teacher monitored the students and the progress of the project. In the third meeting, the teacher and the students assessed the outcome and evaluated the experiences.

The majority of the students agreed that pen pal should be used as a teaching strategy because it was very interesting and very helpful in learning English especially in writing. The students gave various opinions that the teaching strategy had enabled them in increasing their writing ability. From this reason, they agreed that the application of pen pal should be continued in the teaching and learning process. From the observation which was done in the classroom, it could be seen that the students were interested in learning English by exchanging letter to a pen pal.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION
Conclusion

From the analysis, it can be concluded that pen pal project can be used as an alternative way to teach writing recount text. In addition, the students found that pen pal project was interesting for them. The implementation of pen pal project helped them to reduce their boredom so they could participate actively in the learning process. The majority students said that pen pal helped them in learning English. They said that the technique could motivate them because it was suitable with the topics. They also said that the topics had connection with their daily lives. The questionnaire which was given to the students also gave good responses toward the overall view of study. The students were very keen to continue having pen pal in the teaching-learning of writing.

Suggestion

The researcher formulated some suggestions for the English teacher to make the technique successfully implemented in the teaching and learning process. The teacher should be active in finding the interesting material in teaching English, especially in teaching writing. In teaching recount text, the teacher should give the topic that is suitable with the students' writing proficiency. In addition, the topics should relate to the students daily life so that the students can easily build up their ideas in writing their experiences. It is also important for the teacher to always encourage the students in such a way that motivates them, such as by giving applause or compliments.

The researcher also suggests the teacher to continue pen pal project in teaching and learning process. It would be better to be done extensively for the whole semester or even a year. That way, writing will be a habit for the students so they are no longer need to be asked or even forced to write in English. In addition, the researcher also gave the example of Lesson Plan that that can be used for Project Based Learning (appendix 4). It was adapted with the newest curriculum for the government.

In the end, the researcher realizes that this research is far from being perfect. So, she hopes that there will be other researchers who is going to conduct a similar research but in different perspectives.

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