

IMPROVING WRITING ABILITY BY USING FREEWRITING TECHNIQUE

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Abstract

This study is aimed at describing the use of freewriting technique in improving the eighth grade students' writing ability. The research method in this study is classroom action research where the subject of this study is the eighth grade students of SMPN 2 Kalibaru especially the eighth grade students of VIIIC class. The total numbers of students was 24, all together consisted of 15 males and 9 females. The data was in the form of observation checklist in every meeting of each cycle and a test at the end of each cycle. This research conducted in cycle.

The researcher did preliminary study by asking the English teacher about the students' last score in writing. It was known that the mean of students' last score in writing was ≤ 60 which only 25% of students passed the target score (70). It means that the students' ability in writing was low. While, for the students active participation, there were only $\leq 50\%$ of students who were active during teaching and learning process, while the requirement of students active participation during teaching and learning process is 75%.

The result of Cycle 1 showed that the percentage of students who got score ≥ 70 was 45%. While, based on the observation checklist it was found that only 52.12% of students were involved in class or active and 47.8 % students were passive. In Cycle 2, the percentage of students who got score ≥ 70 was 70.8%. While, based on the observation checklist it was found that 82% were active during the process of learning. These results clearly described that the teaching writing skill by using freewriting technique to the eighth grade students of SMPN 2 Kalibaru in the academic year of 2015/2016 could improve the students' writing ability and also increased the students active participation

Key Word: *Improving, Writing Ability, Freewriting*

MENINGKATKAN KEMAMPUAN MENULIS DENGAN MENGGUNAKAN TEKNIK FREEWRITING

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Abstrak

Tujuan dari diadakannya ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan penggunaan teknik freewriting dalam meningkatkan kemampuan menulis siswa. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian tindakan kelas (PTK) dimana murid kelas delapan tepatnya VIII C di SMP Negeri 2 Kalibaru sebagai subjek penelitian. Jumlah total siswa adalah 24 orang, dengan 15 laki-laki dan 9 perempuan. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan observasi langsung dengan mengisi table observasi di kelas di setiap pertemuan pada masing-masing siklus dan tes di akhir siklus. Penelitian ini dilakukan dalam bentuk siklus.

Peneli mengadakan studi pendahuluan dengan melakukan wawancara kepada guru Bahasa Inggris terkait nilai siswa terutama pada keterampilan menulis. Dari hasil wawancara, diketahui bahwa nilai rata-rata siswa dibawah 60 dimana hanya 25% siswa yang mendapat nilai 70, itu artinya kemampuan menulis siswa masih rendah. Sedangkan untuk keaktifan siswa, kurang dari separuh jumlah siswa yang aktif selama proses pembelajaran padahal seharusnya 75% siswa aktif dalam proses belajar mengajar.

Hasil dari siklus 1 menunjukkan bahwa 45% siswa mendapat nilai 70 pada tes menulis. Sedangkan berdasarkan observasi, diketahui bahwa 52.12% siswa aktif selama pembelajaran. Pada siklus 2, 70.8% siswa mencapai nilai target dan 82% siswa aktif di kelas. Hasil tersebut menjelaskan bahwa penggunaan teknik freewriting dalam pembelajaran keterampilan writing dapat meningkatkan kemampuan menulis dan keaktifan siswa di SMPN 2 Kalibaru pada tahun ajaran 2015/2016.

Kata Kunci : Meningkatkan, kemampuan menulis, freewriting

Introduction

In learning a second or foreign language such as English which is known as the lingua franca and has become the primary subject in Indonesian schools, there are some competences or skills that must be mastered by the learners. Those four skills include listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These skills are divided into two kinds, receptive and productive skills. When students are learning language, they develop both receptive and productive skills. Receptive skills include understanding when you listen and when you read. You receive the language during listening, decode the meaning to understand the message, read the text and get the point of the text you have read. Listening and reading are called as receptive skills are because we use our skill in receiving the information from outside. While productive skills are speaking and writing. We use the language that we have acquired and produce messages through speech or written text that we want others to understand. This is the process of producing any information we have got from listening and reading by elaborating our own conclusion.

Since English has become the primary subject at school based on the curriculum, which is stated that students are expected to be able to master four language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing, then it is hoped that by using those English skills, students are supposed to get informational skills which can help them to explore themselves in accessing many kinds of information source in English, such as articles, novels, magazines, etc. After getting any information from reading any written media as mentioned before or from listening to any oral information like BBC news, TV programs, etc the students need something to do, to share or spread all the knowledge they get, therefore, writing is used as the best sharing media.

Furthermore, even though writing is placed at the last arrangement of the four skills that must be mastered in learning language, it does not mean that writing is not important. It has the same equality to be learnt and mastered as the other language skills. Moreover, writing is an important skill during the learning process both in academic context and non-academic purposes. In context of education, it is also worth remembering that most exams, whether they are testing foreign language abilities or other skills, often rely on the students' writing proficiency in order to measure their knowledge (Harmer : 2004 : 3). While for non-academic purpose, writing skill is needed to do the future need such as applying for a new job. The applicant has to submit his application letter as the first requirement to the company or institution he wants to work for. The company will scores based on the applicant's writing before go to the interview process. Therefore, it is obvious and important to have a good writing proficiency. Moreover, in now days society, most of people are using their writing skill to interact or to communicate among them through e-mail, blog, SMS (Short Message Service), or the more popular communication tool, social media such as facebook, tweeter, line, wechat, or BBM (Blackberry Messenger). Although it is the common thing to update our status by writing what's in our mind, in fact, the majority of students usually refuse to write, it is because they do not know what they want to write. The writing skill is considered to be the most difficult of the

language skills for Indonesian students. The students must consider about some aspects of a good writing product such as word choice (vocabulary), grammar, mechanics, spelling or punctuation, and form or organization (Hughes 2003:101).

There are still many reasons why writing English is difficult. Most people's relationship to the process of writing is one of helplessness. First they cannot write satisfactorily or even cannot write at all. Worse yet, their efforts to improve do not seem worked (Elbow: 1973:12). Furthermore, Elbow said that most people have had bad experiences with writing. They have come to dislike it or fear it and usually they avoid it. They feel confused when they have to write because they do not even know how to get start to write. This difficulty happened to the eighth grade students of SMPN 2 Kalibaru. Based on the interview which was conducted with the English teacher, the students writing score was low due to the external and internal factors. The internal factors are most of them get difficulties in expressing their ideas, choosing the appropriate words, having low grammar mastery, and mechanics, moreover, they are too shy to ask about the important information related to the material given. While, the external factor is the teaching media used during the lesson which only focused on textbook. This external factor make the students passive during the teaching and learning process. As a result, the students score in writing was out of the expectation. There was only 25% of students passed the standard minimum score and the rest was failed. The teacher said that they could get better score after they followed some remedial test.

Due to the fact that students are not interested in writing activities, the teacher needs a new technique which can be used to increase the students' learning motivation and the technique is free writing. Elbow (1973:1) stated that the most effective way to improve writing is to do freewriting exercises regularly. At least three times a week. They are sometimes called "automatic writing," "babbling," or "jabbering" exercises. It also can be useful media in order to help students start to write. Moreover, Elbow (1980:14) also found that this free writing activity can help students learn simply to get on writing and not be held by worries about whether they use good words or right words. Free writing is a writing technique that makes students write whatever comes into their head without stopping, worrying about grammar, spelling, organization or even making basic sense. The main aim of free writing is to get something on the page. Start writing and keep writing is the main point of freewriting activities.

RESEARCH METHOD

The Objectives of the Research are:

1. To describe or exposure the use of freewriting technique in improving the eighth grade students' writing ability at SMPN 2 Kalibaru in the academic year of 2015/2016.
2. To explain the use of freewriting technique to improve the eighth grade students' active participation in class at SMPN 2 Kalibaru in the academic year of 2015/2016

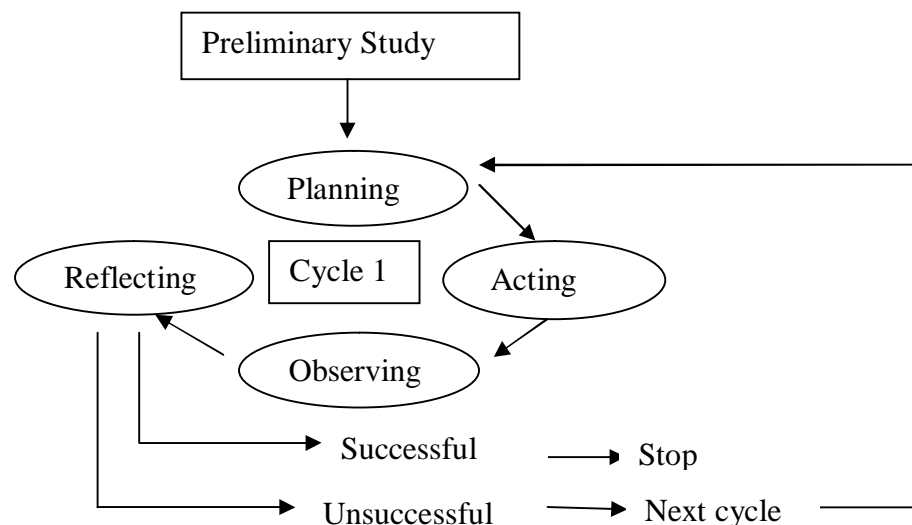
Action Hypothesis

1. The freewriting technique can improve the eighth grade students' writing at SMPN 2 Kalibaru in the academic year of 2015/2016.
2. A freewriting technique improves the eighth grade students' active participation in class at SMPN 2 Kalibaru in the academic year of 2015/2016.

Kind of Research

This research belongs to a classroom action research (CAR). The classroom action research is designed to help a teacher to find out what is happening in his or her classroom, and to use that information to make the wise decisions for the future. According to Kurt Lewin (in Arikunto, 2013:131), there were four components of action research, they were planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.

Arikunto (2013:134) says that Classroom Action Research belongs to qualitative research and it's a kind of recurring and sustaining process. Although Classroom Action Research belongs to qualitative research, the data in taking decision could be in the form of quantitative in order to make it more accurate.



Adapted from Kemmis and Taggart in Arikunto (2010:137)

Criteria of Success

The research would use analytic scoring rubric to score students work. The students could be listed in "pass" level if their score have achieved 70 or more. The students result would be analyzed using the following formula:

$$\text{The students score} = E = \frac{n}{N} \times 100\%$$

Notes:

E= the percentage of the students score of writing test

n= the number of the students achieving the target score

N= the total number of the students.

(Ali, 1993:186)

This research could be said succeed when at least 70% of students pass the target score of writing which was 70. While, for the students' active participation, it was needed 75% of students participated during the teaching and learning process while implementing freewriting technique.

THE RESULT OF THE RESEARCH

1. Result of Writing Test in Cycle 1

There were two meetings in Cycle 1. The first meeting was held on May 16, 2016 from 08.20 am to 09.40 am, the second meeting was held on May 17, 2016 from 08.20 am to 09.40 am, and the writing test was held on May 21, 2016 from am 07.00 to 08.20 am.

Cycle 1 was carried out through certain procedures with cyclical model which consists four components of action research, they are (1) planning (2) acting (3) observing and (4) reflecting (Arikunto:2013:131).

Based on the writing test, it was found that the mean was 64.67 and the percentage of students who scored ≥ 70 was 45% (see appendix 10). Based on the writing test result of Cycle 1, it can be concluded that the criteria of success of the mean score and the percentage score of the student in writing ability was not achieved yet.

2. Result of Observation Checklist in Cycle 1

In Cycle 1, there were two data that had been analyzed. The first data was the students' involvement during teaching and learning process by implementing freewriting technique. The data was gotten from the classroom observation by using an observation checklist. For the observation result of Cycle 1,(see appendix 15). Based on the calculation, 56.9 % of 22 students were actively involved in the teaching learning process.

3. Result of Writing Test in Cycle 2

After conducting the two meetings in Cycle 2, the researcher gave a test to find out the significant impact of freewriting technique on the students' writing ability. The test was held on June 4th 2016 07.00 am until 8.20. The researcher asked the students to compose a simple recount text based on their experience in more than 10 sentences. The result of the students writing test in Cycle 2 is presented in appendix 14. Based on the test result, 17 students or 70.8% got ≥ 70 and 7 students got ≤ 70 in writing test.

4. Result of Observation Checklist in Cycle 2

From the analysis of Observation checklist in Cycle 1, it can be concluded that the requirement of students' active involvement in the teaching learning process of writing ability (75%) had already been fulfilled. In Cycle 2, the students were more actively involved in the teaching learning process than in the action in Cycle 1.

5. The Result of Reflection in Cycle 1

Based on the writing test result of Cycle 1, it can be concluded that the criteria of success of the mean score and the percentage score of the student in writing ability

was not achieved yet. It was because the students still did not accustom in using freewriting as a new technique used in teaching writing which showed in observation checklist that only 56.9% of students were involved in class or active (see appendix 11). Since the result after doing reflection did not achieved the target score yet, therefore, the researcher continued to the next cycle.

6. The Result of Reflection in Cycle 2

Based on the calculation, the mean score was 73.61 and the percentage of students who scored ≥ 70 was 70.8% (see appendix 14). It means that the target requirement of the mean or average score of the students in writing subject had already been achieved. The action can be stopped in Cycle 2. While, the result of students' activeness was 82% of students were active during teaching and learning process (see appendix 15).

In conclusion, the freewriting technique is able to improve the writing ability by developing their activeness in expressing written text logically in a systematic way. It could help the students to write English fluently, accurately in grammar and vocabulary and it is worth being carried out for the writing class. Furthermore, it also helped the students to participate during the learning process.

Table: The Improvement of students writing score and active participation in Each Cycle

Cycle	The percentage of students' writing score	The percentage of observation checklist
Cycle I	45%	56.9%
Cycle II	70.8%	82%

DISCUSSION

This research was aimed to improve the students' writing ability by applying freewriting technique during teaching and learning process especially for VIII C grade students at SMPN 2 Kalibaru. The results from the preliminary study showed that there were some problems that students faced during learning English especially in writing. They were students' low writing ability, they got difficulty to start to write and generate idea. Moreover, they also had low motivation. Therefore, this technique was applied to help the students freely write and easily to start writing.

In Cycle one there were two data that have had gathered by the reasercher and the English teacher, first was the students' writing test score and the second was their involvement during the implementation of freewriting technique. The result of their writing score showed that the mean score of students was 64.67 and the percentage of students who scored ≥ 70 was 45% (see appendix 10) While, based on the observation checklist it found that only 52.12% of students were involved in class or active. Based on the writing test result of Cycle 1, it can be concluded that the criteria of success of the mean score and the percentage score of the student in writing ability was not achieved yet.

Therefore, the researcher and the English teacher did investigation to find out what were the students problems in Cycle and it was found that the students still had low motivation to study because they were still not accustomed with the new technique that had been used by the researcher and also they needed more exercises. It was about 47.8 % of students or almost a half of the total students were passive during the teaching and learning process. Since the result of Cycle 1 was not reach the target requirement of this research, so the researcher conducted the next cycle and combined the freewriting technique with game.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

Based on the writing test result, it can be concluded that freewriting technique can improve the eighth grade students writing ability at SMPN 2 Kalibaru in the academic year of 2015/2016 because by doing freewriting exercise regularly, the students writing skill can be improved. Freewriting helps them to generate ideas and start writing easily. While, the observation of students active participation can be concluded that freewriting technique can improve the eighth grade students' active participation at SMP N 2 Kalibaru in the academic year of 2015/2016.

Suggestion

Based on the conclusions, there are several suggestions proposed to the learners and the English teacher.

1. To learners

In learning English especially writing, doing practice is really important. To be able to write well, the learners need to do more practice in writing. They should not be afraid to share their thoughts with the others as well. Do freewriting can be used to help the students in generating ideas which help them to write easily. Besides, if freewriting is done regularly, it helps students to improve their writing ability.

2. To the English Teacher

Teacher needs to understand that teenage learners have different characteristics compared to adult learners. They have a low attention span, therefore it is difficult for them to express what they want if they are kind of shy students. Therefore, the teacher needs a new technique which helps them to freely express what they want. From this research, it is suggested that the teacher consider free writing as additional technique in teaching writing for EFL/ESL students and it is a contribution in English language teaching and learning, particularly in the way on how to improve students' writing ability.

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