

THE USE OF PROJECT BASED LEARNING TO IMPROVE WRITING DESCRIPTIVE STUDENTS OF THE EIGHTH GRADE

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Abstract

Writing skill is very crucial for students' study purposes as well as enable them to communicate their ideas to other people in daily live context. However, there are many students find writing is not fun, attractive and easy Therefore, it is important to do the research entitled: "The Use of Project Based Learning to Improve Writing Descriptive Paragraph of The Eighth Grade Students of SMP Negeri 1 Kencong in 2019/2020 Academic Year".

The design of the research is Classroom Action Research. The subject of the research is students in 8E SMP Negeri 1 Kencong consisting 31 students. The data is collected by holding a writing test and collaborating with the English teacher as the observer to produce field notes. To analyze students' writing test score, the percentage formula is used.

The implementation of Project Based Learning strategy was done in group. Discussions and practice were included. The media that was used could increase students' interests The research only needed two cycles to achieve the criteria of success It was proven by the calculation score of the test which had been improved. In the first cycle, the test result of the test was only 57 % or 18 of 31 students who got ≤ 75 , and 42 % or 13 of 31 students ≥ 75 that did not achieve the target score. Thus, the first cycle was failed, then the researcher to the next cycle. In the second cycle, the result of the test was 80% or 22 of 31 students could get ≥ 75 and 20% or 8 of 31 students got ≤ 75 . The result of writing test was successful, and it did not need to continue to the next cycle.

Considering the above results, it can be concluded that using Project Based Learning could improve writing descriptive paragraph of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Kencong in the 2019/2020 academic year.

Key word: writing skill, descriptive paragraph, project based learning

Introduction

Writing skill is very significant because nowadays, people use not only verbal communication to communicate with each other, but also non-verbal communication. In other words, writing is an essential form of communication and is

used as a means of communication to

connect people regardless time and places.

A good writing skill enables students to convey their thoughts and communicate their ideas so that those can be well-perceived by others. Hence, writing is one of the most prominent skills which must

be mastered by the English language learners. Writing skills are relatively more difficult compared to the other skills, since it has several issues and difficulties which do not exist in the other skills (Brown, 2004). For many students and teachers, writing is a very difficult skill to learn. Writing is a complex activity, students tend to feel writing is difficult and which make them bored in writing class. It becomes a challenge for the teacher on how to make the students to be competent in writing. Innovative teaching writing method should be implemented to make the students can write well. The teacher's task is to present an active and creative learning process, because basically students really need teacher guidance in the learning process of foreign languages. In the writing lesson the initial stage that the teacher must do is actively provide information. So that, students get more information or ideas. So students need topics that allow them to generate ideas, find forms to fit ideas, and take risks. This means that before writing students must have ideas which are then written in writing.

Based on the information from the English teacher of SMP Negeri 1 Kencong, the Minimal Completeness Criterion (KKM) in writing that

determined by the school is 70. Moreover, from students' writing descriptive paragraph score on pretest of 8E class that has been shown 54.8% (17 out of 31) students who could not pass the KKM which determined by the school and it was categories as low.

There were difficulties in teaching and learning process of writing. It was caused by several factors. First, the difficulties in writing was the students are not capable to make a good paragraph in writing. They had problems in organizing ideas of what they were going to write. Second, most students thought that writing is a difficult skill. They were confused to transform the ideas from their minds, so they need much time just to think what they were going to write. They were also having poor vocabulary and lack knowledge of grammatical rules.

Due to the problems which aroused in the teaching and learning process of writing, it is clear that there is an urgent need of an instructional technique which could overcome the problems of writing. Hence, the researcher looked for an appropriate way which could solve it. The researcher noticed that the use of Project based-Learning (PjBL) in the English instructional process has become more popular and taken into

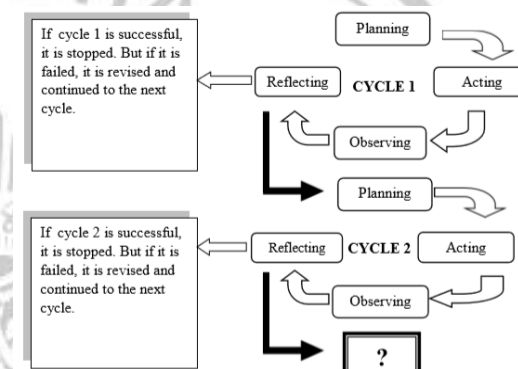
account recently. Simpson (2011) PjBL had a significant effect on the development of the low and medium ability groups of students, the high ability students showed progress in speaking and writing, but not for their listening and reading skills. Because of that, the researcher reckoned that there was a possibility to improve the students' writing skills through the implementation of Project-based Learning, since it is potentially motivating, empowering and challenging the students. Project-based learning focusing in create the product. The result of the product is like model, poster and display. Project based learning in this study will make a poster which related on students writing project.

Method

The researcher used a Classroom Action Research. Action research has the purpose of developing new skill or new approach to solve a problem in the field or the actual problem. In this research, Project-Based Learning is used to improve the students' writing ability. Ary et al (2010:514), Action Research is a process to improve education by incorporating change and involves educators working together to improve their own practice. In short that, classroom action research is a study of social situation that done to reach

the goal improve the students' ability in the teaching learning process.

According to Kemmis and Mc taggart (1998) in Arikunto (2013, p.137) the steps are explained with four stages. Those are planning, acting, observing and reflecting. Before doing the first step, the researchers have to do preliminary study. If the result of cycle 1 is not satisfied, the cycle would be continued to the next cycle with the same steps.



(Adapted from Kemmis and Taggart in Arikunto 2013, p.137)

Planning is a step to prepare the classroom instructional strategy to be developed in the study to solve the instructional problems. When the problems had been identified, the researcher started to develop plans of action to bring improvements on the treated problems after some discussions with the collaborators. Acting is the second step after the planning step to implement the instructional strategy that has been planned. At this stage, the

researcher will need to be well-prepared for the instructional scenario before starting the implementation in class.

Observations are carried out by English teachers and researchers. It is used to observe the actions of the teaching and learning process and data as a result of the study. Reflecting is the activity to analyze the result of observation to know how far the development of the strategy is successful to solve the problem. The researcher will compare the result of the activity to the criteria of success.

Project-based learning has a procedure to follow in order to help the teacher to develop the project as well as to guide students with the project that they take. The procedure consists of the phases on how to implement project-based learning and functions as the foundation to carry out the project-based learning process in the classroom. The steps of project development proposed by The George Lucas Educational Foundation. The procedures are explained as follows:

1. Start with the essential question, at this phase, the teacher starts the teaching and learning process by giving students essential questions.
2. Design a plan for the project, in designing the plan for the project, the teacher gives students chance to

participate by sharing their ideas on the projects which they are about to work on in order to make the project meet with the students' interest, capability, and expectation.

3. Create a schedule, at this stage, the teacher and students discuss about the time allocation of working on the project.

4. Monitoring students' progress on the project is the most crucial stage of project development.

5. After the students turn in their end product, the teacher conducts assessment to measure the students' achievement.

6. Evaluate the experience

This is the last stage of project development where the teacher and students reflect on the project they have done.

The criteria of the success is used to know whether the implementation of the action achieve or not. Based on the result of preliminary study, the result of writing test is success if the students can achieve the standard score from the curriculum. The results of writing test in the cycle is considered successful if there are $\geq 70\%$ of the total students fulfill the writing standard score. The students having improve the writing ability if they reach score ≥ 75 . The action is considered

success if there are at least 70% students get score ≥ 75 or above.

The research instruments used in this research are writing test and field notes. The writing test is consisting of a picture and then the students are asked to make a descriptive paragraph based on the picture. Field notes are used to record the activity during the teaching and learning process.

Result and Discussion

The action of cycle 1 was conducted in two meetings. The implementation of the action in cycle 1 based on lesson plan 1 and 2. The first meeting was done on August 5th, 2019 from 07.00-08.20 A.M, and the second meeting was done on August 7th, 2019 from 07.00-08.20 A.M. The time spent for each meeting was 90 minutes. Writing test was given on August 9th, 2019 at from 07.00-08.20 A.M. The material would be given to the students was describe about favorite person. The students being asked to do a project that are related to descriptive text by making a poster from an idol picture with group.

The result of cycle 1's implementation consisted of the writing test that is used to measure students' writing ability achievements after being taught using project based learning and

the field note is used to analyze students' participation during the class.

In the first cycle, the result of the test was 57% or 18 of 31 students get score ≥ 75 . Therefore, the cycle 1 did not achieve the criteria of success. Then, the researcher continues to the next cycle.

Based on the reflection in cycle 1, the steps in cycle 2 were almost the same with the first cycle. The differences between cycle 1 and 2 were in the action of the activities. In the second cycle, there were some revisions of the action of first cycle.

| The activity of Project Based Learning in cycle 1 | The activity of Project Based Learning in cycle 2 |
|--|---|
| The researcher make a group consisted of 4 students to do the project. | The researcher made a pair to be more effective group work. |
| Make project with 2 random idol pictures. | Make project with 1 picture about hero. |
| The researcher pay little attention to time, some groups do not finish on time | The researcher make a deal with students for finish on time |

Since the result of the research in cycle 1 did not achieve the objective of the research yet, the action in cycle 2 was

implemented. There were two meetings in this cycle. The first meeting was held on August 12th 2019 from 07.00-08.20 A.M, the second meeting was held on August 14th 2019 from 07.00-08.20 A.M. Writing test was given on August 16th, 2019 from 07.00-08.20 A.M.

By modifying the activity in the second cycle, the result of the test was 80.6% or 23 of 31 students get score ≥ 75 . Therefore, the criteria of success had been fulfilled in cycle 2 and it did not need to continue to the next cycle.

As cycle 1 is not successful, some changes are made in the planning of the implementation in cycle 2. Things that have been a focus as the main causes why cycle 1 flopped are modified in cycle 2. Students are given different theme of discussion to work on. The theme is quite different it is specific theme in describing the people, it is about hero. The researcher also changed the students' group work into pair. The different theme and the pair group have brought changes in the class atmosphere because it is shown that the class is easier to handle, since students work and discuss the theme without much caring about other' ideas they only discuss with their partner in pair. The weakness that found by the researcher in this method was when the researcher decided

into a random group, the discussion did not run well. The assignments were did only by a few students, the other they not focus on the assignment because some students had personal quality that desire to stand out. The other friends did not have the chance to the assignment. So, in cycle 2 the researcher decided to divide the students into pair work. When the students did the project in pair, they were learn together and had an understanding during the discussion.

According to Simpson (2011) Project-based learning concerns on the learning activity based on real world problems and challenges that require students to work as a team through meaningful activities and result in a final product. In project-based learning, students are responsible fully for their own learning. Project Based Learning gave them more opportunities to practice writing. Brewer (1997) states group discussion of any short helps participants build their interpersonal skills and confidence about offering individual opinions in group atmosphere. Moreover, those activities facilitated them to understand the lesson easily, students work collaboratively to solve problems. Besides that, the group discussions enhanced their involvement. It gave them

more opportunities to learn by sharing their knowledge each other and asking for further explanation to the teacher. Developing the project within a group encourages the students to speak and listen to others. It makes them share ideas, opinions and suggestions.

The results indicated that the use of project based learning could improve the students writing ability. Harmer (20017, p. 92) stated that pictures are interesting medium to use due to their simplicity and attractiveness. This gives the consideration of adding more pictures as limits and borders in the discussion and writing practice. The media of picture willsupport teaching learning process, it makes the students happy and more enjoy in teaching and learning. Students learnt with picture in two cycles. In this project students choose their own picture, they can imagine and explore the picture. By using project based learning in teaching writing and participate in teaching and learning process in classroom with collaborating with the teacher to make learning process more effective.

Conclusion

Based on the result of the study, Project Based Learning can improve the writing descriptive paragraph of the eighth grade students. It was done by assigning

students to have pair work. The group works and discussions during the project development positively influenced their involvement. In addition, it enhanced their affective aspects in which they could build a positive relationship among students.

In short, this research has answered the action hypothesis stated that the use of project based learning can improve students writing ability. It can be seen from how students were able to make a good paragraph which contains the aspect of writing.

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