

IMPROVING STUDENTS' WRITING ABILITY OF RECOUNT TEXT AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION THROUGH GROUP-PROJECT METHOD OF THE EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS

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Abstract

Writing is one of the skills that are important for students to learn. Writing is often considered the most difficult skill. Therefore, the researcher is interested in conducting a classroom action research. The purposes of this research are to know how Group-Project Method can improve students' writing ability of recount text and students' active participation in writing class of the eighth grade students.

The design of this classroom action research is consisting of four phases within one cycle; those are planning, acting, observing, and then reflecting. The subject of the research is students in 8A SMP Negeri 01 Tlogosari consisting of 28 students. The data is collected by holding a writing test and collaborating with the English teacher as the observer to produce the observation checklist and field note.

In this research, it found that group-project method could improve students' writing ability of recount text and active participation of eighth grade students. It was proven by the calculation score of the test and the observation checklist which had been improved. In the first cycle, the result of the test was 54% students who get ≥ 70 and the average result of students' active participation is 52%. Therefore, the cycle 1 did not achieve the criteria of success. The criteria of success in this research were there must be 70% of students get score minimum 70 in writing test of recount text and at least 70% of students active participating in the learning process. In the second cycle, the result of the test was 79% students get score ≥ 70 and the average result of students' active participation was 76%. Therefore, the criteria of success had been fulfilled in cycle 2 and it did not need to continue to the next cycle.

Based on the research result, it can be conclude that Group-Project Method was able to improve students' writing ability of recount text and active participation of the eighth grade students.

Key words: writing, writing ability, recount text, active participation, group, project method.

Introduction

Writing is one of the productive activities because in this skill students are involved to produce language rather than just to receive it from the teacher. During

this time, writing is often considered the most difficult skill. This statement is also supported by Langan who states "But writing is seldom an easy, one-step journey in which a finished paper comes

out in a first draft. The truth is that writing is a process of discovery involving a series of steps, and those steps are very often a zigzag journey.” (2010, p.12). Based on that statement, we know that writing is not as easy as it seems, because sometimes it is hard to find or determine what we want to write. Sometimes we find it difficult to find ideas, arrange sentences because of lack of vocabulary and ability in grammar.

Based on preliminary study which conducted by the researcher on April 6th, 2019 at SMP Negeri 01 Tlogosari by interviewing one of the English teachers and pre-test which conducted by the researcher on August 1th, 2019, the researcher found several problems that commonly faced by the students in writing such as students found it was difficult to come up with ideas, had lack of vocabulary, difficult to master grammar and felt that English was something foreign so it was difficult to understand. Based on observation of the teaching and learning process, the situation of the teaching and learning process that was observed by the researcher was conducive because the teacher who taught was experienced and knew how to deal with students in the learning process, but for students’ active participation in class,

there were 65% of students who active in class, also the students who active in class were dominated by the female students and the students who sat in front seats. Based on the information and pre-test result which already conducted by the researcher, the minimum completeness criteria (KKM) in writing that determined by the school was 69.75. However, from score data of 8A class that has been obtained by the researcher, the average of students’ score in writing recount text was 34. Out of the 28 students, all of them had scores below the minimum completeness criteria (KKM) that was between 20 until 65.

To overcome this problem, the researcher will use a Project Method that is carried out in a group. "The origin of the method of projects dates back to the early 20th century in the United States. This method was introduced into school education by an American philosopher and his disciples J. Dewey H. Kilpatrick. E. Collings and proclaimed the principle of "learning by doing" (Aplaeva, 2017, p. 446). They will learn the subject through what they do, while the teacher will only help to solve problems that arise. This method is expected to help students be more creative and active in solving the problems. This statement is also supported

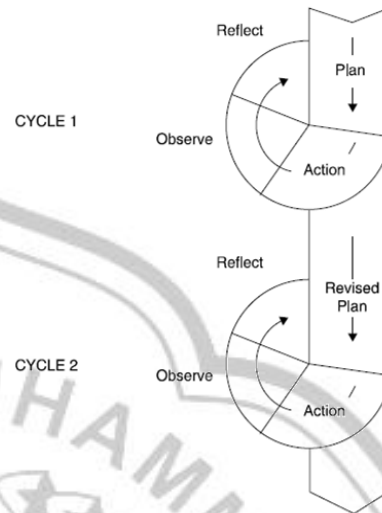
by Knoll who states “It is a sub-form of action-centered and student-directed learning and an enterprise in which children engage in practical problem solving for a certain period of time.” also “For the most part, projects are initiated by the teacher but as far as possible they are planned and executed by the students themselves, individually or in groups.” (2014, p.655).

Method

In this research, the researcher used classroom action research (CAR). According to Burns (cited in Burns, 2010, p. 5), “Action research is a self-reflective, systematic and critical approach to enquiry by participants who are at the same time members of the research community. The aim is to identify problematic situations or issues considered by the participants to be worthy of investigation in order to bring about critically informed changes in practice. Action research is underpinned by democratic principles in that ownership of change is invested in those who conduct the research”.

The CAR design used in this research is Stephen Kemmis & Robin McTaggart’s design which consisted of four phases within one cycle; those are planning, acting, observing, and then

reflecting in a spiral system which is interrelated. The design can be drawn as follows:



(Adopted from Kemmis & Mc Taggard in Anne Burns, 2010, p. 9)

The planning stage is developing a plan of action to improve what is already happening such as doing preliminary study, making a lesson plan and etc. Acting stage is the implementation of the plan that has been already planned by the researcher. Observe stage is observing the effects of the action in the context in which it occurs. In this context, an English teacher in the school will be observing the researcher who gives acting in the class. The last step is reflecting, reflecting stage is reflect on the effects of acting as the basis for further planning, subsequent critically informed action and so on, through a succession of stages. This step is useful to know if what has been

implemented is good or there are some mistakes. After doing all steps in cycle one, so cycle two can be done if the results of cycle one is not successful.

There are some procedures in performing group-project method according to M. Kotarba-Kańczugowska (cited in Kołodziejski, 2017, p. 30):

- a. Teacher getting the students preparing pupils to work using project method and getting acquainted with the method.
- b. Teacher getting the students acquainted with the work rules of project method and paying special attention to pupils' responsibility for the educational process.
- c. Teacher helping the students with selecting the theme and defining the problem situation to make students understand.
- d. Teacher helping with dividing the students into project groups.
- e. Teacher helping with defining the general and particular aims also paying attention at the project key elements.
- f. Teacher setting the dates of consultations and helping with students' tasks distribution.
- g. Teacher helping the student with the access to literature, other materials as

well as information sources and the proper use of various materials.

- h. Teacher consulting the project realization observing the work of particular groups and each student individually.
- i. Teacher listening to the inquiries being made and getting acquainted with the project realization report.
- j. Teacher carrying out the evaluation of work of every group-member with paying the special attention to their engagement, labor, problem-solving process and making the evaluation of the group-work as the whole in accordance with the criteria defined prior. Teacher is also correcting the students' mistakes and praising the group members' creativity.

Based on observation of the teaching learning process in preliminary study, there were 65% of students who active participating in class, it becomes consideration to determine the criteria of success of students active participation in learning process. The criteria of the success for students' active participation in this research was there must be at least 70% students active participating in learning process. The minimum completeness criteria (KKM) in writing that determined by the school was 69.75.

And based on score that has been obtained by doing a pre-test, out of the 28 students in class no one can reach the minimum completeness criteria (KKM). It becomes consideration to determine the criteria of success for the students' writing ability in recount text. The criteria of success of students' writing ability of recount text is regarded successful if at least 70% of students can achieve the minimum standard score requirement that is 70. To measure the data, the researcher uses this following formula: $E = \frac{n}{N} \times 100\%$

(Adapted from Ali: 1993, p.186).

The research instruments used in this research are writing test, observation checklist and field notes. The writing test is consisting of a series of picture and then the students are asked to make a recount text based on the picture. The observation checklist has three indicators to know whether the students are considered as active or passive students. Field notes are used to record the activity during the teaching and learning process.

Result and Discussion

There were three meetings in the first cycle. The first and second meeting of the first cycle were held on September 11th and 12th, 2019 which were on Wednesday and Thursday. On Wednesday the meeting took place at 07.00–08.00

am., and on Thursday it took place at 11.50 am. – 13.10 pm. The third meeting of this cycle took place on the following week that was on Wednesday, September 18th, 2019. This cycle covered four stages of activities namely (1) Planning, (2) Acting (3) Observing and (4) Reflecting.

The materials would be given to the students were recount text and past tense, and then student being asked to a project that are related to recount text by taking a series of picture and make a recount text based on the pictures with group.

In the first cycle, the result of the test was 54% or 15 of 28 students get score ≥ 70 and the average result of students' active participation is 52%. Therefore, the cycle 1 did not achieve the criteria of success. Then, the researcher continues to the next cycle.

The researcher and the observer did reflection cooperatively. There was some revision to do in the research done in cycle 1. The revision done is provided in the table below:

The activity of group-project method in cycle 1	The activity of group-project method in cycle 2
The researcher explained too fast and the material not in order.	The researcher slowed down the explanation and gave the material in good order.
The researcher lacked in handle the class, there were some	The researcher optimized in handle the class by paying

The activity of group-project method in cycle 1	The activity of group-project method in cycle 2
students who talking freely to their friends and not paying attention to the researcher.	attention to all of the students in class and not only focuses on certain students.
The researcher did not remind the material of the previous lesson (brainstorming) in the second meeting.	The researcher reminded the material of the previous lesson (brainstorming) in the second meeting.
The researcher divided students into groups based on student's number.	The researcher divided students into groups based on the score.

After doing the revision in the lesson plan, the cycle 2 was implemented. There were three meetings in cycle 2. The first and second meeting of the first cycle was held on September 25th and 26th, 2019 which were on Wednesday and Thursday. On Wednesday the meeting took place at 07.00–08.00 am., and on Thursday it took place at 11.50 am. – 13.10 pm. The third meeting of this cycle was took place on the following week, that was on Wednesday October 2th, 2019. This second cycle covered four stages of activities namely (1) Planning, (2) Acting (3) Observing and (4) Reflecting.

In this cycle, some activity was almost the same, but there was instruction that would be little bit different. In the cycle 1, the students were divided into groups based on the students' number, but in cycle 2, the students were divided into groups based on their score in the first cycle.

By modifying the activity in the second cycle, the result of the test was 79% or 22 of 28 students get score ≥ 70 and the average result of students' active participation was 76%. Therefore, the criteria of success had been fulfilled in cycle 2 and it did not need to continue to the next cycle.

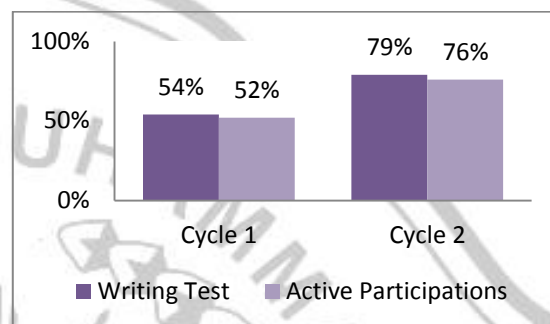


Figure1. Percentage of the result of students' writing test and active participations

It showed group-project method can improve students' writing ability of recount text and students' active participation This statement supported by Howell (2003), "The project method is a teacher-facilitated collaborative approach". While, according to Hayes & Flower (cited in Sara Cushing, 2002) "writing is recursive and not a linear process: thus instruction in the writing process may be more effective than providing models of particular rhetorical forms and asking students to follow these models in their own writing." From that statement, we know that the writing process will be more effective when students are given certain instructions

while the writing process occurs than when the students are asked to follow a particular model in their writing. And also students work on a project in groups so that they can help each other.

Also, this method is based in the philosophy of Pragmatism and the principle of "Learning by Doing" (Aplaeva, 2017, p. 446). Based on the statement, we can also say that students' active participation can improve students' writing ability of recount text through group-project method because this method is focus on what the students do and also the students will have more roles so that they will be more actively participating on the learning process.

In this method, the researcher found the advantages and disadvantages of group-project method. There were four advantages that could be noted from the implementation of group-project method, they were; 1) this method was very interesting for students because they could do something fun in a project together like in the making of picture series. In this research, they take a picture together with friends so it was a lot more fun. 2) This method could improve students' writing skills because they were motivated by interesting activities. In this method the students did a projects together, and later

on in the cycle 2 students were grouped based on students' ability in writing so students who have higher abilities could help students who have lower abilities and then the students motivated to improve their writing skills. 3) By dividing the students based on their writing abilities, this could also facilitate the teacher in directing and guiding students to write. 4) Students who were accustomed to being alone in the class start to open up themselves to join the group and then it affects their active participation during the learning process later on.

However, there were also disadvantages of the group-project method, they were; 1) when the researcher divided the students into a group, in one group there will be male and female students and most of the students did not want to be in one group with the opposite sex. 2) Students were often felt shy and awkward when they were being put in together in a group with the opposite sex. Whereas in cycle 2, they will be divided based on students' abilities in writing and most students who have higher abilities were female students so researcher need to work hard to persuade the students to be grouped according to the direction of the researcher. 3) When the students showed their active participation while doing a

project, the class became crowded so that it may disrupt the learning process in the other classes.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the result, the conclusions are below:

1. Group-project method can improve students' writing ability of recount text through group-project method of the eight grade students at SMP Negeri 01 Tlogosari in academic year 2019/2020 by providing an opportunity to discuss and work on a project together.
2. Group-project method can improve students' active participation of the eight grade students at SMP Negeri 01 Tlogosari in academic year 2019/2020 by making a project together.

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