

STRATEGIES TO SOLVE WRITING DIFFICULTIES ON RECOUNT TEXT FOR INCLUSION STUDENTS

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to find out the teachers' strategies to solve the students' difficulties in writing recount text. This study was conducted in the eighth grade of an inclusion class in Yogyakarta. The study belongs to a qualitative research. The participants of this study were three teachers of English. The study investigation was done by interviewing the three teachers of English at Junior High School. The data collecting techniques were interview and recording. There were several steps to analyse the data: first, analysing the students' difficulties, then interviewing the teachers and the last step is descriptive analysis. The result of the study shows that the teachers' strategies to solve the difficulties are: (a) in content aspect, the teachers used picture series as the learning media and guided writing; (b) in organization aspect, the teachers used guided writing; (c) in grammar aspect, the teachers used random word, modelling of text and mini dictionary product; (d) in mechanic aspect, the teachers recommended to improve reading habit of students; (e) in generic structure of recount text aspect, the teachers used semi guided and supported by picture series as learning media.

Keywords: *Writing difficulties, Teachers' strategies, Recount text*

INTRODUCTION

Writing skill is the last skill that must be mastered by learners. This skill also requires a lot of practice and training because students have to produce a well-accepted written form that is readable and understandable. It is not surprising that writing has been considered than other skills and this skill needs more concentration and thinking skill. This statement supported by Leo (2007), he states that writing as a process of expressing ideas or thought in words could be

done at leisure time. Children learn the steps of writing when they build new skills upon the old.

Learning process in writing skill was influenced not only by students but also by teachers. According to Ahmad (2013) students' lack of confidence is caused by teachers' strategies in teaching process which is do not appropriate with students' learning styles and cultural background. It can be concluded that the teachers should apply right strategies to teach writing, including providing prompt, effective feedback to students and raising motivation to their students.

Students and teachers in various condition of classroom activities may face various problems. This study aims to find out the teachers' strategies to solve the students' difficulties in writing recount text. This study explores the strategies used by the teachers to solve difficulties in writing recount text faced by inclusion students.

Before doing this study, to explore related topics to discuss, observation has been conducted in schools and several teachers of English have been interviewed to get the real condition of the research site. This preliminary study aims to illustrate the problems to be studied more clearly. The process of the preliminary study was based on the concept of study that is the teachers' strategies to solve the students' difficulties in the eighth grade of an inclusion class. The purposes of process interviews to three teachers of English are to find out the conditions of teaching and learning process, learning media, condition of students and teachers, as well as teaching materials.

The preliminary study also features field notes, so that the data collection is more complete. From the results of observation and interview, it can be concluded that recount text is the most difficult text to be learnt by students because they feel difficult in expressing their ideas, they did not know what will they write and what should they write, they have weakness in grammar and they got more theories in English material than practice them. The teachers also find in teaching writing recount texts because the students think that it is hard thinking skill, in practice, the teachers should decide appropriate strategies to make students feel interested and motivated in this material and in the assessment, to evaluate writing products, the teacher needs a lot of time.

The study was applied in one of Junior High School where there is an inclusion class in the school. Inclusion class is a class that carries out education where children who have mild or moderate disorders and normal children could study together in one class. In education system, they called children with special educational need.

The similar topic of research in this domain has been done by some researchers. First, Adas and Bakir (2013) on their study on *Writing Difficulties and New Solutions: Blended Learning as an Approach to Improve Writing Abilities*. Their study discussed about the context of teaching and learning and how to integrate writing activities as part of the blended learning outcome. On the other hands, this study focuses on teachers' strategies to solve students' difficulties in writing recount text. Second, Fareed, Ashraf and Bilal (2016) on their study on *ESL Students' Writing Skills: Problems, Factors and Suggestions*. Their study discussed about the problems in undergraduate ESL students' writing, the factors that hinder students' writing abilities, and how to improve ESL students' writing skill. However, this study focuses on solving inclusion students' writing recount text for foreign language learners, not second language learners.

In short, this study explores teachers' strategies to solve students' difficulties in writing recount text at inclusion classes.

REVIEWING LITERATURE

To support this study, some theories or literature reviews are used.

1. Recount text

Writing process is already taught in school and colleges. In Indonesia, students in Junior High School learn several short functional texts. Among different kinds of the text, this study focuses on recount text. Anderson & Anderson (2003) state that a recount text is a piece of text that retells past events, usually in order in which they happened. The social function of recount texts is to tell past experience by retelling in original sequence. The samples of recount text are experiences, diary and personal letters.

According to Lancashire Country Council (2008), a recount text has several generic structure consists of orientation, events and reorientation. Each generic structure has social functions. The explanations of them are explained below:

- a. Orientation: Orientation gives reader the background information needed to understand the text, and the reader will recognize about the scene setting and the context of the text.
- b. Events: events are ordered in a chronological sequence. Sometimes, additional details are added to the give some information for the reader.
- c. Reorientation: In this concluding paragraph, the writer can give his/her personal comment or statement.

A recount text has linguistics characteristics or in English terms is called language features. Gerot and Wignell (1994) explains the language features of a recount text that should be fulfilled are specific participants, using material process, a circumstance of time and place, using past tense and temporal sentence.

2. Causes of writing difficulties

- a. Koutsoftas and Gray (2012), the students have often difficulties dealing with the areas of productivity, complexity and grammar.
- b. Al-Mekhalafi (2011) reveals that this skill requires a lot of practice and training because students have to produce a well-accepted written form that is readable and understandable.
- c. Sugiyono (2010) states that most of students hate to learn writing because learning writing is boring and difficult.
- d. Lorch (1984), in learning writing recount texts, many students make some mistakes and face difficulties in building and developing their imagination.

3. Students' difficulties in writing recount text at eighth grade of an inclusion class

- a. Content aspect: the students are lack of getting idea, they could only write one paragraph and they only focused on the event. It made the content less.
- b. Organization aspect: this aspect is related to generic structure of recount text
- c. Grammar aspect: Most students use present tense verbs. They are still confused in changing from present tense to past tense.
- d. Mechanic aspect: The students applied incorrect spelling, punctuation, capitalization and paragraphing. This can be the causes of meaning confused.
- e. Generic structure of recount text aspect: In orientation, many students only wrote the time, in event, they could build the storyline but the content is still less because they composed three generic structures in one paragraph. In

reorientation, most of students forgot to write their personal comment on their writing assignment.

4. *Teachers' strategies in teaching writing recount texts*

A writing skill is one of the productive skills that should be mastered in using a language. Harmer (2007) explains that the key factor in the success of productive skill tasks is the way teachers' organize them and how they respond to the students' work. It means that teaching cannot be separated from learning. Teaching happens when there is someone who wants to learn. This study focuses on teaching writing. Harmer (2004) states that the reason for teaching writing to the students of English as a foreign language involves reinforcement, language development, learning style and most importantly writing as a skill in its own right. There are several kinds of teaching strategies in a recount text:

- a. Personal journal writing. A journal is a form of notebook about daily writing. According to Orem (2001) journals are really helpful for both students and teachers in the process of teaching and learning writing. Students learn the right usage of writing in a foreign language and teachers make sure that the students improve their writing skill.
- b. Guided writing. It is an alternative strategy that is used by teacher to guide the students in writing subject in order to the students easier in writing skill. According to Crown (2007) states that guided writing is an essential component of a balanced writing curriculum, providing an additional supported step towards independent writing. It means, this strategy is one of important strategy that is used by the teacher to support the students during learning process.
- c. Shared writing. Fountas (1999) said that interactive writing lessons may begin to look more like shared writing as the teacher and students collaborate to create longer and more complex text. It can be concluded that this strategy could help the students in generating ideas through composing text together with the teacher. Students and the teacher both contributing their thoughts and ideas to the process.
- d. TAD (Transitions- Actions- Details). This strategy is writing strategy used TAD (Transitions- Actions- Details) chart which consists of columns and rows that shows a sequence of events. There are three columns that must be filled by

students, such as transitions column, action column, and details column. Then each column can be filled by several rows. After filling each row and columns with sentences, the students can move the sentences that consisted about transitional signal, sequence of event, and several details actions into a new recount paragraph. (Peha, 2003).

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research. According to Lodico (2006) a qualitative case study to discover meaning, investigate the processes and to gain in-depth understanding of an individual, group or situation. Qualitative study also strategies to identify anticipated phenomena and influences and generates new grounded theories about the latter. In other words, qualitative research provides rich narrative descriptions. This strategy is to understand the process by which events and actions take place. Qualitative methods look for the process through which behavior (Chaedar, 2002).

This study was conducted at eighth grade of an inclusion class in Junior High School. The participants are three teachers of English who already taught about recount text. The data collecting techniques were interview and recording. The aim of this collecting data is to get the data about teachers' strategies to solve the students' difficulties at eighth grade of an inclusion class.

This study used descriptive analysis to describe the teachers' strategies to solve students' difficulties in writing recount text that have been collected. After identifying and determining the data, then it is described into words or sentences.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings are discussed and divided into five sub topics; content aspect difficulties, organization difficulties, grammatical difficulties, mechanic difficulties and generic structure of recount texts difficulties.

1. Teachers' strategy to solve content aspect difficulties

The third interviewee said that to start learning about texts, students must be able to know the characteristics of each type of text, for example between recount text and narrative text. Both of them tell of past events, but recount text

tells about experiences or something that has happened, for example about experiences while on vacation. While, narrative text tells about fiction, fairy tales, legends, fable or stories that are not real.

She also said that the use of media in teaching recount text or other text is very important, it would make students easier to understand the material that will be presented and it can reduce boredom during learning process. For example the use of picture series in teaching recount text, there is a student who cannot capture the material without a visual media. Therefore, the teacher displays an example of recount text through a series of pictures.

In addition, the second interviewee said that writing is an application of what students have already learnt. If students are already able to write, they will learn taught drafting but if they cannot write the teacher will do guided writing to help students practice writing. He also said that the ability to understand a text of students in Junior High School is only a function of the text.

Picture series strategy is appropriate to apply in class in which with many students' characteristic. A work group is not only to help students get the knowledge but they could build the social interaction. The process of learning is also supported by picture series media. It would make the learning process more fun and interesting. Thus, the student would not get bored.

2. Teachers' strategy to solve organization difficulties

Based on the first and third interviewees, to start learning recount texts, a teacher and students discuss together the parts of a recount text to become good organization. The strategy that is used for organization aspect is the same as the strategy of generic structure aspect because the two aspects are interrelated. The teacher calls this strategy is semi guided writing and it is supported by tools such as LCD and computers. Through this strategy, students would be more active because there is communication between a teacher and students.

It is an appropriate strategy to use in teaching organization aspect because through this alternative strategy the teacher could guide the students in writing subject in order that the students feel easier in writing skill.

It is different with the second interviewee which is used drafting and mind mapping in teaching writing organization of a recount text, it is applied when his

students are have understood the theory of recount text and start to practice writing a recount text.

3. Teachers' strategy to solve grammatical difficulties

The first interviewee said that before teaching writing a recount text to students, a teacher should teach grammar. For example, the teacher gives an example of a recount text to her students, and then students are given a task to identify certain grammatical aspect such as the simple past tense verb by underlining the words. After that, the teacher would explain more about simple past tense.

To motivate or encourage students in learning writing recount texts, the first interviewee considers that the use of media is important, for example, random words which is designed to be several colors to be made into one sentence in each of the same colors. Having arranged the colorful words to be correct sentences, students put the sentences in the correct order to be a paragraph and create a recount text.

She said that to start learning of recount texts, the teacher gives an explanation about the correlation between simple past tenses that they have already learnt and recount text that they would learn. For example, the teacher explains why we discuss simple past tense because a recount text is a form of text that uses past tense verbs, this text tells about events which occurred or happened in the past.

The second interviewee stated that to solve students' difficulties in grammar, the teacher used modeling of texts to support writing practice activity. However, solving the difficulties in grammar are still the task of the teachers, probably one of the ways that can be done is routine reading activity in classroom. The third interviewee added that she gave her students a task of making mini dictionary about present tense verbs when they were in the seventh grade. And, in the eighth grade, they continued learning simple past tense verbs in their mini dictionary. So when creating text, students will learn independently to explore simple past tense verbs.

Those strategies are appropriate to carry out because before learning recount texts, it would be better if the students could master simple past tense

first. Simple past tense could be learnt gradually, start from familiar word until difficult word. And the modification with a game or media, it will be more interesting in learning process.

4. Teachers' strategy to solve mechanic difficulties

According to the second interviewee, writing is a productive skill and it is the most complicated language skill, so before starting the writing practice, it would be better for the students to start learning receptive skills, namely comprehensive language skills such as reading activities. Students would find correct spelling in words, the application of punctuations, capitalizations and paragraphing that would be used in writing texts.

In addition, the third interviewee said that if the students are motivated to start practicing reading diligently, they could explore new knowledge about writing style by themselves. If they do not understand the meaning of certain words, they could look up them in a dictionary or consult it to the teachers or study guides. So, her suggestion is that the students need more practice reading both either in school or in their homes.

Assessment of the writing mechanism is low because this section is not too much considered both when practicing writing and when evaluating. The teacher only focuses on the subject matter. According to the third interviewee, if the mechanism assessment is also given by applying a specific strategy in learning process, it would require a long time in learning of writing text. However, the difficulty of this mechanism would be better if it is considered when practicing writing as well, so students would know their mistakes. It can be done by checking and correcting the students' writing works.

5. Teachers' strategy to solve generic structure of recount texts difficulties

According to the first interviewee, to start learning of recount texts, the teacher and students discuss and identify the parts of recount text by dividing them. The teacher presents a recount text and guided by the teacher, students identify which part of the text is orientation, events and reorientation and the function of each part of the text. The teacher called this strategy semi guided writing because the students are active learners.

In teaching recount texts, the third interviewee begins by giving examples of several recount texts that have been divided in accordance with the generic structure, so that the students would immediately be able to know the part of recount text. In this strategy, media play a great role, supported by media, for example picture series to guides students in compiling their own recount text and tools such as LCD and notebook in displaying the examples.

In orientation aspect, the teacher explained that the function of orientation is to introduce the story before starting the events, it includes who, what, when and where or there is opening as a background.

In events aspect, this aspect is a body of the text that is why the teacher more focuses on events. To practice build storyline, the first and third interviewees recommend using picture series media to practice it. First interviewee applied picture series in group work, beside to practice build storyline, this strategy can help students to improve their social interaction with other students.

In reorientation aspect, the teacher explained that the function of reorientation is that the writer or the student writes his or her personal comment or opinion about the event, the student could write the impression of his or her experience. But, many students forgot doing it.

All interviewees are also applied a guided writing strategy in teaching students to write, either writing recount texts or other texts because the strategy is easy to apply to students who have a variety of character and the curriculum of Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

The factor of the success of learning process study is the suitability of the teaching strategy in learning process. So, the teacher should define the best strategy and use media to support in teaching process that is based on facilitate condition of school and characterization of students. Based on the result of interview, the use of media in learning process is important because one class may here many characteristic of students, especially at eighth grade of an inclusion class, several students need special treatment in learning process, if there is only a conventional technique, they could not learn the whole material optimally. Being

supported by the media, they could receive and understand the material well because they could see and do the subject matter.

The teachers' strategy to solve content aspect used picture series as the media and group work assignment. Picture series is also used in solving generic structure of recount text with supported by guided writing strategy. In organization difficulties, the teachers used semi guided writing strategy. The teachers' strategy to solve grammatical difficulties could be used is random word. And to solve mechanic difficulties, the teachers only suggest to students to increase their reading habit to overcome their difficulty. In generic structure of recount texts, the teachers used semi guided writing strategy and picture series as the learning media.

The result of this study implies that the influence of success in learning process especially in writing recount texts or other texts do not only come from the students but also from the teaching strategies which are applied by the teacher. The students' difficulties could be overcome if the teacher applied the correct strategies.

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