

THESIS ARTICLE

Improving the Eighth Grade Students' Recount Paragraph Writing Achievement by using Sentence Cards at SMPN 3 Balung

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Abstract

This research was intended to improve the eighth grade students' recount paragraph writing achievement by using Sentence Cards. The subjects of this research were class VIII E students at SMPN 3 Balung in the 2013/2014 academic year that were determined purposively. The design of this research was classroom action research. The data collection methods of this research were writing test, observation checklist, interview guide and documentation. Based on the results of observation in Cycle 1 and 2, the students showed improvement in their participation during the teaching and learning process. The result of observation in Cycle 1 related to the students' participation was 51.72% in the first meeting, and then it increased up to 58.28% in the second meeting. Meanwhile, the result of the students' writing achievement test in cycle 1 showed that the mean score of the students' writing test was 74. There was 58.62% of the 29 students who got score ≥ 75 . In Cycle 2, the result of the students' participation was 68.97% in the first meeting, and then it increased up to 82.76% in the second meeting. Meanwhile, the result of the students' writing achievement test in Cycle 2 showed that the mean score of the students' writing test was 80. There was 82.76% of the 29 students who got score ≥ 75 . Based on the results of this research, the use of Sentence Cards could improve the students' recount paragraph writing achievement and participation during the teaching learning process.

Keywords: Classroom Action Research, Sentence Cards, Recount Paragraph Writing Achievement.

Introduction

English is spoken as the first language by over 300 million people and used as a means of communication by many more worldwide (Hornby, 1995:1107). In Indonesian context, as the authorities formulated the instructions in the 2006 curriculum (KTSP), English is considered a foreign language that must be learnt by Indonesian students. It is taught as a local content subject at Elementary school and as compulsory subject at Junior High School and Senior High School. In learning English, students are required to learn the four skills of English namely speaking, listening, reading and writing. They also have to learn the language components, such as vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. Writing is one of the language skills which is often considered to be difficult to learn by the students in learning English as a foreign language. Fadloeli (1986:1) states that writing skill is considered very difficult, because the writer communicates his thought to other person without direct interaction. Therefore, people have to ensure that what they have written can be understood easily by the reader without any further help from the writers.

After doing preliminary study, it was found that the students in SMPN 3 Balung still experience difficulties in writing. It does not only happen in writing a text or paragraph but also in writing a word correctly. The English teacher in SMPN 3 Balung uses lecturing technique and question-answer in teaching. The teacher started teaching by giving explanations, giving some notes, and the examples to the students, and then asking the students to do tasks. It makes the students feel bored and less interested in learning English. In teaching writing, the English teacher has applied jumbled sentence to the students but it is not in the form of sentence cards.

Concerning the students' difficulties in writing, the researcher tried to use sentence cards as the alternative media in teaching paragraph writing. The use of sentence cards was inspired by the use of word cards in teaching writing. According to Nation (2008:66), sentence cards is believed to be useful and good for the students because sentence cards have some advantages as follows, (1) sentence cards help students retrieve the words meaning, (2) sentence cards help students use time efficiently on the unknown words, (3) sentence cards can be used for self or group study, (4) sentence cards are very convenient for

students to bring with them anytime anywhere. Based on the advantages above, sentence cards is expected to be useful to improve the students participation and the students score in English especially in writing.

The previous research related to the use of word cards or sentence cards was conducted by Prajayanto (2010). She used classroom action research which aimed to increase the students' vocabulary mastery of SMPN 10 Jember in the 2009/2010 academic year. By using word cards she proved that the seventh grade students of SMPN 10 Jember have good achievement in vocabulary. This provided by the result of vocabulary achievement test. In cycle I, the students who got score ≥ 70 was 64.1% and in cycle II was 76.9%. It means that the use of word cards on can improve the students' vocabulary mastery. The other previous researcher who had done a research related to the use of word cards is Oktaviana (2012). She was conducted the effectiveness of word cards in vocabulary achievement of SMPN 5 Tanggul Jember in the 2011/2012 academic year. By using word cards she proved that there was a significant effect of using word cards on the seventh grade students' vocabulary achievement. It was indicated by the significant value in the independent sample of t-test. The significant value was 0.041 (lower than 0.05) it means that word cards had a significant effect on the seventh grade students' vocabulary achievement at SMPN 5 Tanggul Jember. The result of DRE was 9.67%. it means that the use of word cards in teaching vocabulary was more effective 9.67% than the lecturing method in teaching vocabulary.

Based on the explanation, a classroom action research is used to improve the students achievement of writing recount paragraph. Related to the significant contribution of sentence cards in teaching English, an classroom action research entitled "Improving the Eighth Grade Students' Recount Paragraph Writing Achievement by Using Sentence Cards at SMPN 3 Balung Jember 2013/2014 Academic Year" was conducted.

Research Methods

Classroom action research was used in this research because this research was intended to improve the students' paragraph writing achievement by using sentence cards on the eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 3 Balung in the 2013/2014 academic year. According to Arikunto (2006: 91), classroom action research is a research which is done in the classroom by doing an intentional activities. Therefore, classroom action research with cycle model was applied in this research. Each cycle covers four stages: planning of the action, implementation of the action, observation and evaluation, and reflection. Further, Arikunto (2006: 91) says that in conducting the classroom action research, the researcher needs to do it collaboratively with another researcher or team. Dealing with the statement above, the classroom action research was conducted collaboratively with the English teacher of class VIII E in SMP Negeri 3 Balung. The collaboration focused on planning the action, implementing the action, observing the class, and doing reflection.

The area determination method had been determined by using purposive method. Fraenkel and Wallen (2006:100) state that a purposive method is a method in choosing a research based on a certain purpose or reason. The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 3 Balung. There are two reasons of choosing this school as the research area. The first reason is that sentence cards had never used in this school. The second reason is the Headmaster and the English teacher gave permission to the researcher to conduct this classroom action research.

The subjects of this research were the students of class VIII E in SMP Negeri 3 Balung in the 2013/2014 academic year which consists of 32 students. It was based on the English teacher's information in the preliminary study that grade VIII E students had difficulties in writing. Data collection method was the method used to collect the data in a research. The methods that were used in collecting the data were writing test, observation checklist, interview guide, and documentation.

Evaluation was done to know whether the use of sentence cards could improve the students' writing achievement and the students' participation in the teaching learning process or not. The evaluations were classified as process and product evaluation. The process evaluation was done by conducting observation in each meeting during the teaching and learning process that was intended to get the list of data by observing the students' activeness in the classroom. Meanwhile, the product evaluation was done by giving writing test in order to get the students' scores that was used to find out the students' writing achievement.

This classroom action research was considered successful if the students' mean score of writing was at least 75, and it could be reached at least 75% of the research subjects. Moreover, This classroom action research was considered successful if the result of observation showed that the students' active participation at least 75%.

The data analysis method was an important thing in a research to analyze the obtained data. The data gained in this research are primary data that covers the students' score of writing test and the result of the observation data in learning process. The result of students' activeness in the observation checklist was analyzed by using the following formula to find the percentage of the students' active participation.

$$E = \frac{n}{N} \times 100\%$$

Notes:

E = the percentages of the students who are active

n = the total number of the students who are categorized as active students

N = the total number of the students

(Ali, 1993: 186)

Then, to find the percentage of the students who get the writing test score of 75 or more, the score was analyzed by using the following formula:

$$E = \frac{n}{N} \times 100\%$$

Notes:

E = the percentages of the students who achieve > 75 as the minimum score.

n = the total number of the students who achieve > 75 as the minimum score.

N = the total number of the students
(Ali, 1993: 186)

Discussion

In this research, the use of sentence cards as media helped the students in construct their writing. This research proved the theory that Karim and Hasbullah (1986:72) has in their book. They said that sentence cards help the students practice arranging sentences into a paragraph. Harmer (1998:80) also states that like many other aspects of English language teaching, the type of writing we get students to do will depend on their age, interests and level. Therefore we need a media that appropriate with the students and also can encourage the students motivation in learning English. The one of media that appropriate with the students age namely sentence cards. This media also could attract the students interest. In this research, that kind of aspect already applied in task 1 in each meeting. The students with their group asked to arrange sentence cards into a good story. The students did the task attractively with the other member of the group. In this research, it was also revealed that the use of sentence cards in the teaching learning process could improve the students' participation continuously in every meeting.

In cycle 1, some of the students showed great enthusiasm with paying attention to the researcher's explanation and answering the researcher's questions. But some other students still did not pay attention to the reseacher's explanation. This condition was changed after the researcher showed the example of sentence cards in front of the class. The students gave their attention to the sentence cards and the researcher's explanation. In cycle 2, the students showed the improvement of their participation. By giving simpler explanation, catching the students attention with sentence cards and giving more attention to the students, they became more active than in cycle 1.

Meanwhile, related to the students' writing achievement test, the students' recount paragraph writing also continuously increased. Before carrying out the actions, it was found that the students in SMPN 3 Balung still experience difficulties in writing. It does not only happen in writing a text or paragraph but also in writing a sentence correctly. This condition was proven by the students' previous mean score that was 67.34. Having implemented the actions which were using sentence cards in the teaching learning process of recount paragraph writing, the mean score of the students' writing achievement test was 74 in Cycle 1. However, the result did not achieve the target required. It means that some aspects need to revised. The revisions cover: (1) giving clearer and

simpler explanation to the students about how to tell the chronological of the events in order, (2) giving clearer and simpler explanations about how to compose sentences grammatically in a paragraph, (3) using louder voice and clearer articulation in giving explanation to the students in order that all of the students especially the students in the back row understand and paid attention on the researcher explanation. After revising some aspects made in the action in Cycle 1, the action continued to Cycle 2.

In Cycle 2, the students' mean score of writing achievement test increased up to 80. Therefore, the actions were stopped. The above result showed that the use of sentence cards can solve the problems or the students difficulties in writing. Helped by the translation provided in the backside of the cards, the students could arrange the cards into a paragraph easily. This research result also showed that there are some advantages in using sentence cards in the teaching learning process of recount paragraph writing achievement. (1) sentence cards can help the students in generating ideas then developing the ideas easily in shorter time. They can concentrate on the information structured and the relationship among the ideas so the students can write easily about the paragraph they are going to write. (2) sentence cards is the effective prewriting step because it easily allows the students gather information and organize their ideas. Considering the above discussion, it can be concluded that the teaching learning writing by using sentence cards could improve the students' writing achievement and their participation in the teaching learning process of recount paragraph writing at SMPN 3 Balung in the 2013/2014 academic year.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Based on the result of the data analysis of the writing achievement test and observation after conducting the action in cycle 1 and 2, it can be concluded that :

- the use of Sentence Cards could improve the eighth grade students' recount paragraph writing achievement at SMPN 3 Balung. The improvement can be seen from the result of the mean score, that was 74 in cycle 1 increased up to 80 in cycle 2. In addition, the percentage of the students who got scores ≥ 75 was 58.62% in cycle 1 increased up to 82.76% in cycle 2.
- The use of Sentence Cards could improve the eighth grade students' participation in the teaching learning process at SMPN 3 Balung. The improvement can be seen from the percentage of the students' participation in cycle 1 increased from 51.72% in the first meeting to 58.62% in the second meeting. Then, in cycle 2, the percentage of the students' participation also increased from 68.97% in the first meeting to 82.76% in the second meeting.

Considering the significant result of this research, some suggestions are proposed to the English teacher, the students, and the other researchers.

- The English Teacher

It is suggested that the English teacher to use Sentence Cards as the alternative media in teaching English especially for writing skill to improve the students' writing achievement and their participation. It is due to the result that Sentence Cards could improve the students' recount writing achievement because Sentence Cards can assist the students organizing their ideas and the inclusion of examples with specific details.

- The Students

The students at SMPN 3 Balung, Jember are suggested to use Sentence Cards to improve their writing. It is because by using Sentence Cards, the students can generate and expand more ideas in shorter time, so they can develop the ideas into paragraph writing easier.

- The future researchers

It is suggested to the future researchers who have the same problems in the teaching and learning process of writing skill to use sentence cards, because dealing with the result of this research it could help the students generating their ideas in writing a paragraph. It is also suggested to use this research result as an information and reference in conducting the same or different research design to increase the students' writing achievement and to use different or clear procedures in using better sentence cards.

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