Using Stick Figures to Enhance the Eighth Grade Students' Recount Text Writing Achievement

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Abstract: This research was intended to enhance students' recount text writing achievement by using stick figures. The design of this research was a classroom action research. The research area was at SMPN 11 Jember. There were 38 students as the subjects of this research. Writing test and fieldnote were used to collect the data. This research was carried out in one cycle since the students' score already achieved the research criteria. The result of writing test showed the improvement of the students' achievement as can be seen from the percentage of the students who got ≥ 72 as standard score. According to the observation fieldnote, most of the students were able to apply the writing skill components such as grammar, vocabulary, organization, contents and mechanics correctly in their writing. Therefore, using stick figures in series could enhance the eighth grade students' recount text writing achievement at SMPN 11 Jember.

Keywords: Classroom Action Research, Writing Achievement, Stick Figures

One of the most important skill in learning English is writing skill. Writing is categorized as a productive skill which means people use language to produce through written form. The main purpose of writing is to communicate. Chaffee (1999:5) stated that writing is an active and purposeful process which is using the written symbols for thinking and communicating. In addition, people could communicate by using written form.

Unfortunately, for most of the students, communicating or sharing their ideas in the written from is not an easy matter. Therefore, writing skill is considered as the most difficult skill in learning English (Richards, 1990:100). Another reason why

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writing skill is considered as the most difficult skill is that in order to order to write easily and fluently the writer should develop a variety of prerequisite skills. This statement was supported by Stone (2001:26) Those prerequisite skills in writng such as vocabulary, grammar, content, organization and mechanics are needed to develop. This explained that in writing, there were so many aspects that have to be considered.

Most of the students thought that writing was a hard task especially when they were asked to write a text. They had difficulties in organizing their ideas and thoughts in to writing. They were also confused how to start and end the writing and they had difficulties in finding the supporting details of the writing. Related with writing a text, the text used in this research is recount text. Goatly (2000:30) stated that a recount text is a text that describe past experiences by retelling the sequence of events in which they happened. One of the ways to overcome the students' problem was using a media. In this case, the media used is stick figures in series.

Stick figures are simple drawing that can be easily drawn by teacher. The shape of stick figures looks like a stick. According to Karim and Hasbullah (1986:20) in drawing stick figures, the teachers are not required to have a capability in drawing since the stick figures are very simple drawing. Wright (1989:17) also stated that the stick figures in series could provide information which could be referred in storytelling since there are some pictures which related each other.

Before this research was conducted, the preliminary study was done at SMPN 11 Jember to find the students' problem in learning English especially for the students of VIII B in the academic year 2015/2016. Based on the preliminary study, the students' main problem are The students of VIII B were lack of vocabulary and less

understanding in grammatical context. Besides, in writing the text, they did not know how organize their ideas and thoughts in to a writing. Because of this problems, most of the students did not achieve the standard score. The standard score was 72.

Most of the VIII B students did not achieve the standard score. In teaching writing, the teacher did not use any media, the students mostly asked to work in group rather than gave an interesting media to write a certain text. This kind of teaching made the students less motivated to learn English especially writing skill. In addition, this classroom action research was intended to solve the VIII B students overcoming their problems in writing. This classroom action research was conducted with cycle model that covered 4 stages. They were; (1)planning of the action, (2)implementation of the research , (3)evaluation, (4)developing the plan (Lewin in Elliot 1991:70)

The curriculum applied in SMPN 11 Jember was School-Based Curriculum. For the eighth grade students, a set of competencies was listed in the curriculum applied. Based on the School-based curriculum, the basic competency of writing for the eighth grade students of junior high students included writing short and simple functional texts (Depdiknas, 2006). In teaching the students, the teacher never applied stick figures in series.

Dealing with the use of stick figures as teaching media, some researchers, such as Wijanarko (2006) conducted a classroom action research to the seventh grade students at SMPN 1 Lumajang. Based on the analysis of the data, the students'score was improved. In his research, Wijanarko explained in detail about the indicator of the research such as constructing the relevant sentences Another research was done

by Anggraini (2009) who also conducted the classroom action research, and she notes that the stick figures in series can help students to produce recount texts. Yet another research was done by Magfiroh (2010) showing that there was a significant effect of implementing stick figures on the eighth grade students' writing achievement at MTsN Kencong. In other words, using stick figures give a significant effect to the students' writing achievement at MTsN Kencong.

Research Method

The design of this research was classroom action research. the purpose of this research is to overcome the actual problems faced by the students in learning English. According to Elliot (1991:69), action research is a study of social situation with a view to enhance the quality of action within it. Thus, the classroom action research was done because there was a real problem in the classroom that must be solved.

This research was conducted at SMPN 11 Jember especially VIII B class as the subject of this classroom action research since the students in this class still had difficulties related with writing achievement. There were 2 kinds of data collected in this research. The data collected from writing test and observation. In collecting the data from writing test, the students were asked to write a simple recount text based on the set of stick figures in series provided. There were eight pictures of stick figures in series that have to be interpreted and made in to a recount text. in making a simple recount text, the students gained keywords as hints to make them easier in doing the test. Apart from writing test, observation was done in the first and second meeting. Observation was used to collect data about how the learning task using stick figures can help the students to make a recount text such as how the students interpreted the stick figures given by the teacher. In other words, by using

the observation, the researcher would focus on the teacher and the students' interaction and behavior during the teaching learning process especially how the learning task using stick figures could help the students to make recount text.

To find the percentage of the students who got score 72 or more, the scores of the students' writing test were analyzed quantitatively by using the formula: $E = n/N \times 100\%$, where E is the percentage of students who got score 72 or more in the writing test; n : the total number of the students who got score 72 points or more in the writing test and N : the total number of the students (Adapted from Ali, 1993:39)

While the data from observation was analyzed non-statically since it dealt with the description of the situation and condition happened during the teaching and learning process. After gathering the data of observation in the form of field note, the researcher accomplished the observation data gained by using inductive analysis technique to analyze the qualitative data. Since, the main focus of using inductive analysis technique is to organize and present the findings of the research so that it could facilitate the understanding of those data (Mertler 2009:141), there are three main steps of the technique such as organization, description and interpretation.

The Research Findings

The result of the writing achievement improved in the cycle 1. There were 84.10% students who achieved the standard score ≥ 72, only 15.78% students could not achieve the standard score. In the previous score, it can be seen that only 42.10% students achieved the standard score while 57.89% students did not achieve the standard score. From the explanation above, the improvement of the students'

writing achievement could be clearly seen since it was improved from 42.10% in previous score to 84.10% in the cycle 1. In addition, since the 84.10% students had achieved this research's target, the cycle 2 was not neccessary to be conducted.

From the observation that was done in the dirst and second meeting using field note, it could be known that stick figures in series could help the students to produce recount text. Since the focus of the fieldnote was to collect data about how the learning task using stick figures can help the students to make a recount text, the focus of the observation were in the learning task.

In first meeting the students were asked to make some sentences dealing with the stick figres in series provided. Most of them had difficulties related with the grammatical rules also vocabulary used. Then, in the first task of the second meeting, the the students who correctly applied the grammatical rules and vocabulary increased. The similar thing happened in the second task of the first and second meeting. in the second task of the first meeting, most of the students were confused how to organize the sentences in to a recount text, they also did not know about the mechanical term of writing. Besides, some of them still confused about the content of the story. In the second meeting most of the students could face thier difficulties in producing the text since most of them could produce a recount text correctly dealing with the correct organization, content and mechanics.

Discussion

Considering the result of the writing test in the cycle one in which there were a significant improvement from 42.10% in the preliminary study to the 84.21% in the cycle 1, the second cycle was not neccessarily conducted. In other words, only 16 students who were able to achieve the standard score while 22 students could not

achieve the standard score in the preliminary study. On the other hand, 32 students were able to achieve the standard score while only 6 students who did not acheve the standard score in the first cycle.

The students' improvement was also on the aspect of writing such as vocabulary, grammar, content, organization and mechanics.The improvement of the students who achieved the target score proved that the used of stick figures could really help the students in producing the recount text. Moreover, the result of this research was relevant with the theory saying that stick figures in series could be used to tell the story (Karim and Hasbullah, 1986:11). The result proved that stick figure could help the students in writing a recount text.

From the observation field note, the learning task using stick figures could help the students in producing a text. There were 2 tasks in each meeting. The first task was to construct sentences based on the given stick figures in series. This task could help the students learn some aspects of writing skill. The focus of the first task was to trigger the students to make the recount text by writing each sentence of each stick figure provided.

In other words, producing sentences for each stick figures could help the students learn two aspects of the writing skill. Those aspects are vocabulary and grammar. From the first task, the students learn about the vocabulary. It included the appropriatness of the vocabulary used in their writing. Besides they could collect the vocabularies needed by observing the stick figures in series given and also by looking at the keywords provided. In relation with grammatical rules, the students should focus on the use of tense in the story, the preposition and all of the grammatical rules appeared in producing recount text.

In the first meeting, seems confused about the vocabularies and the grammatical rules. Thay needed to observe the stick figures in series first in order order to find the vocabularies needed. some of them applied the inappropriate vocabularies such as *present* and *date*. They prefered using the vocabulary *present* rather than *join*, the vocabulary *date* rather that the preposition *on*. This mistake was common mistake done by the students in the first meeting. In the second meeting, the total number of the students who made such mistake is clearly less than before. Related with the grammatical rules, the students' common mistakes was about the preposition. Most of them, made mistake by applied the wrong preposition without considering the correct used of the preposition. Most of the students prefered using preposition *in* rather than *on* to explain about the time signal. Some of them were making mistake on the tense of the story. They should use the past tense in making recount text. The total number of the students who made such mistake in the second meeting were decreased.

In the second task, the students helped to learn about the organization, content and mechanics. Dealing with organization, the students mostly missed the story detail that made an uncompleted story. Then, the most common mistakes of thhe students related to the content of the story was on the wrong content of the story. Some of them tent to have different interpretation of the story. Next, the students mostly made mistakes in mechanics. Almost all of the students were making mistakes dealing with mechanical device. In the second meeting, the total number of the students who made mistakes in those aspect was decreased. This proved that the used of stick figures in series could help the students developing the prerequisite skill of the writing in producing the recount text.

Conclusions

Based on the result of data analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that the use of stick figures in series could improve the students' writing achievement at SMPN 11 Jember. Therefore, the English teachers at the school have to use stick figures in series as it could help the students improve their writing achievement. It is also suggested for the eighth grade students to learn by using stick figures in series for learning writing because such media are able to improve their writing achievement. Therefore, they can improve their writing ability. At last, it is also suggested for other researchers, to conduct a further research dealing with the use of stick figure in series on the other English language skills or components by using similar research design or using different research design such as an experimental research.

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