IMPROVING STUDENT'S WRITING SKILLS THROUGH THE APPLICATION OF CONTENT STRUCTURE STRATEGY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of content structure strategy on improving student's writing skills and to determine whether or not the content structure strategy was effective in increasing student's writing skills. This study used a cluster random sampling method consisting of 28 students taken as the research sample from three classes. The results showed that there was a significant difference between student scores before and after treatment. Student writing recount text increases after use. In addition, the calculated t-test match result is higher than the matched t-test result table coefficient. In conclusion, there was a significant different between the student's achievement before and after the treatment. The student's mean score on the post-test was higher than the mean score on the pre-test. This shows that the content structure strategy is effectively used in learning recount text in Al-Ikhlas Lubuklinggau Junior High School.

Keywords: Ability, Content Structure, Strategy, Writing

INTRODUCTION

English is one of the international languages that uses as global communication. Besides, English has an important role in science, education and other fields. Many scientific books and literary works were written in English. Therefore, it was important to learn English. The objective of teaching English to Indonesian students was that the students were able to communicate in English both orally and in writing. To achieve the objective, the students should be master the four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. Besides, the students should learn the language components, such as pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar, to support their language skill.

Writing is the representation of language in a textual medium through the use of set of sign or symbol (known as writing system). It was distinguished from illustration, such as cave drawing and painting, and non-symbolic preservation of language via non-textual media such as magnetic tape audio.

Heaton (1998) states that writing skills are complex and something difficult to teach, requiring mastery not only of grammatical rhetorical devices but also of conceptual and judgmental elements. Some students are extremely unconfident and unenthusiastic writer. There may be many reasons for this, such as they have never written much in their first language, they think that they did not have anything to say and could not come up with ideas. Whatever the reason, the teacher needed to help such students improve the writing ability so that they recognize writing as being a normal part of classroom practice and they come to write the tasks with as much enthusiasm as they do other activities.

There were some factors which make some students could not write well. The main factor was they seldom practiced to write what was in their feeling, ideas and thinking. Especially for the eighth year students of Al-Ikhlas Junior High School, they were confused where and how to start writing in their lesson because they felt difficult to choose and express their ideas in appropriate words. They couldn't concentrate on forming letters. They did not understand how to organize their ideas and use mechanics to make good writing. They were also difficult develop their ideas fluently. Then they were lack of vocabularies. As result, they were not able to explore their abilities in writing. The effects of problems were the students could not be successful in subject of writing so that they cauld not reach score which was appropriate with the minimum mastery criteria. The minimum completeness criteria for junior high school students of Al-Ikhlas Lubuklinggau is 75.

Based on the interview to the teacher of English of the Eighth Grade students, it was found out that the students encountered the following problems: (1) the students lacked of vocabulary mastery so that they could not express their ideas in English words; (2) the students did not understand about the grammar well; (3) the students did not know paragraph organization so they could not organize sentences, into coherent paragraph; (4) writing lesson might not be interesting enough for the students to learn.

Teachers can help students to have good organization in writing skills through content structure as one of the strategies. Content structure is a simplified graphic organizer for teaching writing to children in schools. The content structure strategy is a strategy that focuses on strips and then creating a strip based graphic organizer. After that the teacher divides the students into small groups consisting of three or four students per group. And finally, the teacher instructs students to make recount paragraphs based on the organizer's lines and charts.

Based on the description above, this study aims to determine the effect of content structure strategies on improving student's writing skills at Al-Ikhlas Lubuklinggau Junior High School. It focuses on answering three questions: (1) the type of writing is focused on the recount text; (2) the strategy to be used is a content structure strategy; (3) the subject of this research refers to Al-Ikhlas Lubuklinggau Junior High School.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research method uses a pre-experimental design. A pre-experimental design is an experimental design that does not meet all the requirements necessary to control for the influence of extraneous variables. This is a design in which an experimental procedure is used but not all extraneous variables are controlled for. In this study the authors used a one group pre-test-post-test design. The design involves only an experimental group.

To collect data, the authors used the data provided before learning (pre-test) and after teaching or treatment (post-test). The test is a means of measuring achievement abilities, interests and other treats. The sample was tested with material related to the research problem. The data were collected through a written test in the form of a paragraph consisting of 80-100 words. The time allocated for students to take the test is ninety minutes.

There would be one test and would be administered in analyzing the data. First, the data concerned with the pre-test scores. Second, the data concerned with the scores of the students in the post test. In analyzing the data obtain from the test, the writer

applied three techniques. They were: (1) individual score; (2) comperison to minimum mastery criteria; (3) matched t-test and normality data test.

The next stage is the individual score assessment stage. Student paragraphs will be assessed in five elements: content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics. Content referred to the idea of paragraph; organization was concerned with ideas and their logical and coherent language and development; vocabulary covered the correct or appropriate choice of words and idioms; structure referred to the grammar and word order; and mechanics was the area of punctuation and spelling. The students asked to write a paragraph that consisting of 80-100 words in the form of recount text. Each paragraph would be scored accordingly. It meant the student's composition would be scored based on the five elements above and then the scores would be based on the criteria established. The following table 1 showed the complete scale and ranges in writing.

Table. 1
Scale Range and Category

Elements	Scale Range and Category			
	Excellent to Very Good	Good to Average	Fair to Poor	Very Poor
Content	30-27	26-22	21-17	16-13
Organization	20-18	17-14	13-10	9-7
Vocabulary	20-18	17-14	13-10	9-7
Structure	25-22	21-19	17-11	10-5
Mechanics	5	4	3	2

The table above showed about the elements of scoring in writing, scale range, and category that should be calculated based on the student's writing result. And then, the writer changed this score into the student's individual score. In doing this, the writer added the scores of the five elements of writing namely, content, organization, vocabulary, structure and mechanic. After calculating the student's individual score, the writer put these scores into some categories they were very poor, poor, nearly sufficient, sufficient, nearly good, good, very good and excellent. The range of this category was presented follow table 2.

Table. 2
The Student's Categories Score

No	Individual Scores	Category
1	9.1 – 10.0	Excellent
2	8.1 – 9.0	Very Good
3	7.1 – 8.0	Good
4	6.1 – 7.0	Nearly Good
5	5.1 – 6.0	Sufficient
6	4.1 – 5.0	Nearly Sufficient
7	3.1 – 4.0	Poor
8	< 3.0	Very Poor

When the student's individual score was calculated, the writer used the comparison to minimum mastery criteria. If the students passed the MMC grade, so the students would be pass in their writing skill/otherwise, if the students did not achieve the MMC grade, so the students would fail in their writing skill.

RESULT

The Student's Writing Ability in the Pre-test, the pre-test is given to students to find out the initial value obtained. The number of students in class X.A is 28. Students get questions that are faced with working on the questions but trying to do them well. Students found several problems in making recount text, namely problems with vocabulary, sentence structure and developing their ideas. The results of student scores on the pre-test can be seen in the appendix.

After calculating the results of student's scores on the pre-test, the researcher found that the highest score of students was 81 and the lowest score was 45. namely 5 students or 17.86% of students passed the pre-test. The researcher found that the student's highest score was 81 and the lowest student's score. Whereas in the pre-test, there are five students or 17.86% of students who passed.

The Student's Writing Ability in the Post-test, there were twice treatments after doing pre-test. In the treatment, the students were taught about recount text through content structure strategy. It was used by researcher to improve student's writing ability. In the first treatment, the researcher taught about recount text about holiday and in the second meeting, the students were given the characteristics of recount text. After doing the treatments, the students were given the post-test. The post-test items were equal with the pre-test item. The students did the post-test as well as they could do based on the information which gotten from the treatment. Based on the result, there are 12 students or 42.86% students that failed in the post-test and there are 16 students or 57.14% that passed in the post test. The result of post-test to know the progressing of the students writing ability could be shown by comparing the student's score of pre-test and post-test.

Normality Data Test, after the researcher calculated the normality data test in pre-test (see appendix B.21 and B.22). The researcher got that X^2 obtained was 7.69 with the degree of freedom (df) 5(6-1). Since level was 95.05, X^2_{table}= 11.07. It could be said that the data test was normal. The test of appendix (see appendix B.23, B.24 and B.25) the researcher obtained 3.61 with degrees of freedom (df) 5 (6-1) because the level is 95%, (0.05) X^2 table= 11.07. It can be said that the test data is normal.

The Match T-Test Calculation, the student's obtained score was 62.93 in pre-test, while the student's obtained score was 73.10 in post-test. The researcher could state that the average score in the post-test was higher that the students average score in pre-test. After seeing the comparison table of scores on the pre-test and post-test in attachment B.14 and the calculation in attachment B.15, the researcher found that t-test was 5.085. The researcher could take the conclusion that it was significantly to teach writing ability through content structure strategy to students.

DISCUSSION

The researcher got the result of the finding above, it could be stated that content structure strategy was a good strategy for teaching students writing ability. According to Olivia (2013) stated that contents structure strategy prompts the students to discuss major ideas and important details and requires them to think deeply about how ideas are interconnected. It can be concluded that there was significantly effective in teaching writing ability.

Writing is one of the most important language skills in human life. By writing, a person is able to channel or influence society by using the thoughts or ideas he writes. As stated Tarigan (2008) that writing is used to report/notify, influence and the purpose and objectives can only be achieved properly by people who can compose and express their thoughts clearly. This clarity depends on thinking, organization, words usage and sentence structure. These four things must be mastered by a writer so that the aims and objectives to be conveyed can be conveyed properly.

Writing is one of the most difficult language skills when compared to the other three skills. This is in line with Purnamasari (2015) that when compared to the other three language skills, writing skills are more difficult to master even by native speakers of the language concerned. This is because the ability to write requires mastery of various linguistic elements and elements outside of the language itself which will become essays.

Based on the result of pre-test, the researcher could say that the students could not write well, they found out some problems when they wrote such as, they found out the difficulty to combine the paragraph, lock of vocabulary, they did not know much about grammar and also the punctuation. The student's highest score in the pre-test was 81.5 which was gotten by one students and the student's lowest score was 45 which reached by one student. While in the post-test, the highest score was 84.5 which gotten by one student and the lowest score was 58.5 which reached by one student. Based on the average score, the researcher could state that student's writing ability in recount text was better than before. Based on the result, it could be taken the conclusion that it was significantly effective to teach writing ability through content structure strategy junior high school Al-Ikhlas.

After pre-test was given by the students, the researcher had given twice treatment, where the first treatment discussed about recount text of holiday and the second treatment learned about going to village and also discussed about the characteristics of recount text. The treatment were used for developing the student's writing ability included the integration of cognitive aspect and psychometric aspect. When the treatments were going on, the researcher applied content structure strategy. In this process, the students got the knowledge as long as they learned. The students had learned the material of recount text. It was about the definition of recount text, the generic structure of recount text, the examples and the way how to develop their ideas. After that, the students could increase their ability when they produced their idea in making composition of writing in the written form. They were given the freedom to write based on their knowledge.

Based on the treatment through content structure strategy in learning English, the students were given the high motivation. It could be shown that, the students were active and brave in doing the writing learning process. Active learning activities might help students to increase their ability in writing. In content structure strategy, there were some instructions were given by the teacher to the students. The students were

asked to active in the learning process. The researcher gave treatment to the students in making recount text through content structure strategy in twice. In understanding the strategy, the researcher gave the instructions step by step. That is why, the student were able to understand about the material. The steps of content structure strategy were the teacher show the picture that was related to the study, after that the teacher distributed the example of recount text and then the teacher instructed to the students to find out the difficult word of the recount text and the next the teacher make a strip based on the example of recount text, then the teacher made a graphic organizer based on the strip. And the last the teacher dived the students into small group which consisted of three or four students each group and instructed the students to make a recount text based on the strip and graphic organizer was given by the teacher. The content structure strategy was a good strategy to guide the students to learn English especially in writing. By using content structure strategy in learning writing was very helpful because the students were given instructions what they should do in writing, especially in writing recount text. But the students did not only need a strategy to increase their ability, they also need support, motivation and more practice. As long as treatment' process, the researcher gave support, motivation and more practice.

Based on the student's score that gotten by the students, it was shown that, in the post-test, the student's score were better than their score in the pre-test. The student's score improved since the students were taught through content structure strategy. When the student's score were calculated based on Minimum Mastery Criteria. There were some students failed to pass the minimum mastery criteria but their score were still improved. After gotten the result, the researcher searched the problem of the students why they could fail. Based on the results, they could not express their idea in exactly word because they were lack of vocabulary. The student's writing was difficult to be understood. It was caused they still could not use mechanics and grammar correctly. After that, they were also lack of motivation in learning writing. The students needed motivation in classroom to make them become active not passive. Student's engagement was especially important in preventing problems. After doing the research, researcher found that the students did not interest in writing recount text. They were just passive while the learning process. When the students were asked for asking, they did not respond and they were just silent. They did not tell their difficulties. Based on these reasons, the researcher tries to provide motivation so that students can understand and be active. Students needed motivation to increase their ability in learning process and it also influenced the result of the learning process.

Based on the result of matched t-test calculation, it could be shown that it was significantly effective to teach writing of recount text to the eighth year students of Junior High School Al-Ikhlas. In the pre-test, the students obtained score was 62.93. It meant that before doing treatment, many students did not pass of the minimum mastery criteria. Meanwhile, after the treatment, the post test score was 73.10. In learning writing ability through content structure strategy, the students had shown their active in the class as long as learning process. They had high motivation so the learning process was going on. In learning process, motivation was really needed by students because it gave the high influenced to decide what they to do. As the result, the motivation influenced students to improve or increase their ability in writing skill.

Based on the research, the result of match t-test calculation showed that the t_{obtain} was higher than the t_{table}. The t_{obtain} was 5.085 as the critical value of t_{table} in significant level 0.05 was 1.703. It meant that the null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected

automatically and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) was accepted. From this result, the researcher could take conclusion that this strategy gave proof that it was significantly effective to teach recount text through content structure strategy to junior high school Al-Ikhlas. The writer known that the learning teaching proses should be effective in order to the objective of the study or the goal of the study was valuable. According to Core effective learning is gained understanding of the individual and social processes necessary to become effective learners. Besides, effective learning includes this extra crucial ingredient which actively involves the students in metacognitive processes of planning, monitoring and reflecting. I this case, in order to the learning teaching process can become effective the teacher should make their students be active or make active learning. Active learning is a process wherein students are actively engaged in building understanding of fact, ideas and skills through the completion of instructor directed tasks and activities.

And then, the writer compared the result of matched t-test to the related previous study. There are similarities and differences between the results of the author's matched t-test with previous related research, namely Puspita's (2008) research. This similarity is the English language skills (writing) using pictures in brainstorming activities and also the two strategies are effective in improving student's writing skills. And the difference is that the results of the matched t-test, the results of the matched t-test are 5.085, while for Puspita, the matched t-test is 7.14. The total sample of the writer was 28 students. Meanwhile, the Puspita sample consisted of 40 students.

Based on the description above, the authors conclude that both strategies are effective in improving student's writing skills. This can be seen from the suitable t-test results. The result of the t-test matched by the author or t_{obtain} is 5.085 with 27 degrees of freedom (28-1) because the level is 0.05% while the t_{table} is 1.703. Meanwhile, for Puspita's t-test, it was obtained 5.14 with 39 degrees of freedom (40-1) because the level was 0.05% while the t_{table} was 1.684.

In writing activities, writers must also be able to take advantage of the language and vocabulary they get. The writer also has to update the writing activity in certain exercises so that he can really master these writing skills. Besides being a place for creativity, writing can also be used as a conveyor of ideas about something. One way to improve the teaching and learning process of writing is by changing the media or teaching patterns used by the teacher (Salfera, 2017).

CONCLUSIONS

It can be concluded that there is a significant difference between student achievement before and after treatment. The student's mean score on the post-test was higher than the mean score on the pre-test. This shows that the content structure strategy is effectively used in learning recount text in Al-Ikhlas Lubuklinggau Junior High School.

SUGGESTION

It is expected that all teaching staff can apply interesting and effective learning methods so as to motivate students to be enthusiastic about learning. The writer also hopes that in the future students will be able to focus on learning as much as possible so that they can understand what is being taught by the teacher.

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