IMPROVING STUDENTS' WRITING NARRATIVE THROUGH WRITING GAMES FOR ACCELERATION CLASS

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ABSTRACT

This study addresses how writing games improve acceleration students' writing narrative achievement. This study has been conducted in acceleration students. It uses classroom action research, the data analyzed from qualitative and quantitative data. To solve the problem, the teacher has implemented Writing Games as a technique. The teacher chose two kinds of writing games; they were Silly Story" and "What's Next?". "Silly Story" focuses on students' ability on writing sentences and "What's Next?" focuses on students' ability on making paragraph. This research consists of two cycles and each of it has planning, action, observation and reflection. These findings implicate that acceleration students were interested in writing games and involved in it well. *However, during the research, especially in the first cycle, there was still one group was less active in "Silly Story" because they could not discuss each other and the group was quite big.*

Keywords*: Writing narrative, games, classroom action research*

I. INTRODUCTION

Writing is a means of communication to express and transfer ideas onto a blank sheet of papers or other media. As a communication device and act of communication, it suggests an interactive process where writer and readers are placed through the text. As one of four skills that is taught to ESL students, especially in junior high school in Indonesia, the objective of writing is stated in the curriculum called KTSP (*Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan*) which is clearly stated that English is not only as a spoken language to communicate, but also as a written language. The ability of covering the both functions of English will be used to be applied as the students' daily life as their life skill. Specifically

in the syllabus, the objectives of writing are stated to maintain the students' ability in writing sorts of texts, such as report, procedure, descriptive, and narrative, with clear, readable, and correct grammar and spelling. The writer would like to focus on certain syllabus; it is English syllabus for 8th grade students, especially on writing narrative in semester 2. Besides, the objectives of writing as stated above do not mention on forcing the students to do writing as achieving scores to pass the grade but skill.

As a matter of fact, the condition which occurred in the acceleration class is that the students did writing just for pursuing the score from the teacher for they are the gifted students and they wanted to pass their grade successfully higher than the regular ones. In fact, most students felt that writing was such a tiresome and difficult activity, and it sometimes made them frustrated, at the time, they needed to think much for transferring their thoughts and ideas onto a blank sheet of paper and they did not know what they had to write on it. Since they had no experience about it and lack of practice, they might feel writing something was hard to do. This condition is more complicated when they were worried about the language focus, such as spelling, grammar, or even diction, they used were false and not proper. It makes them hesitate to express their ideas. Consequently, students felt that writing was such a talent not as a skill, which it was hard to learn.

In addition, most students found difficult to do the intense and active thinking before writing. Moreover, students who had no experience, were quite hard to express their thoughts into writing, as they had only limited ideas to write. Whereas as in reading, the students should be encouraged and be focused on to what they want to 'say' rather than the form. Besides, when they started to write they could not afford of the mistakes they made and it made them worried about. They may find dissatisfied when they knew commonly that their teacher was the only one audience who watches and monitors their writing and they did not have much time to reflect the way of their writing. The technique which was

used by the teacher merely focused on the writing activities stated on the textbook.

The significance of this study tends to the implementation of writing games theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the study-is important to prove the existing theories about writing games which can improve students' achievement on writing narrative. Thus, practically the study is important for the teachers who are willing to use writing games as the guidance and assistance in order to attract students' interest in writing narrative for it is suitable with the curriculum and the teacher will be easy to conduct the activity. They are also useful for the students to be more motivated in writing and attracted with the activity without taking much attention to the score as the first point of view. They will be more involved with writing and assumed that writing is an interesting activity, especially writing narrative because it can arouse their imagination and creativity.

Writing Narrative and Writing Games

Writing Narrative

When we talk about writing narrative, it is referred to writing stories (Jordan, 1988; Pillai, 2001). In writing narrative, it is considered as a reflection of the author's told as a story. The author composes it by constructing the past event or even the present events to be told and observed (Jordan, 1988). Stories provide entertainment, it has a purpose to entertain the readers, and it touches affection, arousing emotions of the readers for its sequence of time or events (Nunan, 2003). Pavlenko (2002) emphasizes the narrative construction as variables containing of race, genders, ethnicity, class, and sexuality, and it can influence the readers' mind about what it is being told.

Not like other skills, writing needs students' creativity, imagination, and knowledge to arrange what their ideas in their minds will bear in written response. It is essentially a reflective activity that requires ample time to consider about a certain topic, to analyze and to classify any background knowledge. They need suitable language to arrange these ideas in the form of a coherence discourse. In order to do so, they have to link and develop information, ideas, or arguments in logical sequence (Chakraverty and Gautam, 1994).

When the teacher assigns the students to write narrative or a story, she/he can lead them to imagine that telling a story is like telling their own personal experience, or what they experienced in the past, such as an interesting moment, unforgettable moment, or embarrassing moment, and they order the events chronologically (Heim and Edwards, 1986).

Writing Games

To reduce the boredom of learning into more enjoyable, game is a good offer of it for it contains goal, rules, and fun (Hadfield, 2000). Through playing games, students can learn English as the way the children learn and say their mother language without being aware they are studying; thus without stres, the students can learn a lot in learning the target language. While Wright, A. Betteridge, and Buckby (1984) write that games can help the teacher to create contexts in which the language is useful and meaningful. The learners who want to take part in the activities, must understand what others are saying or or have written, and in order to do so, the students then must speak or write in expressing their own point of views or give information.

Games are not just time filling activities in the class, but also have a great educational value. It can encourage and motivate students' interest while they are learning in fun atmosphere, so that at the same time students can practice the language skills, as reading, speaking, listening and writing (Ersoz, 2000); it is

also supported by Kim (1995) that it is possible to learn a language as well as enjoy oneself at the same time.

Kim (1995) states that the advantages of using games in language learning that games provide students with practices six skills of the target language and they encourage the students to interact and communicate as well for they have motivating and amusing contain to be conducted as a welcome break from the common activity along in the language class. Games also make students to be more relax and fun in the class so that games assist students to learn the language easily. games encourage students to interact and communicate to each other. games create a meaningful context for language that is being learned by the students. In addition, most games include friendly competition in order to maintain students' interests.

Further suppport comes from Zdybiewska (as cited in Uberman, 2002), she believes that games can be a good way in practicing the target language that being learned by the children, since they are able to provide a model of language on what the learners will use in the real life.

It is more useful when the teacher is able to choose the appropriate games for the students and they can practice the language as well through the games (Ersoz, 2000). The indication of the usefulness of the games on students can be shown by the engaging of students in the games themselves, as it is said by Wright, Betteridge, and Buckby (1984) as follows:

> Games also help the teacher to create contexts in which the language is useful and meaningful. The learners want to take part and in order to do so must understand what others are saying or have written, and they must speak or write in order to express their own point of view or give information.

In addition to this, games can be associated with the practices of the language. In this context, students practice, learn, and use the language while they are engaged and participated in the games. Sorensen and Meyer (2001) state that:

If games are generally seen as a framework for providing a meaningful context for language acquisition then games should be understood as significant models for the design of educational material for language teaching and learning.

In addition, the teachers must be convinced when they decide to use the games in breaking students' problems in language learning, especially in writing, they must be clear with the words, materials, and the instructions.

In conclusion, games are able to help the students use and practice the target language being learned in a relaxed way. Games are also highly motivating since they are amusing and interesting. Games also can be used in giving practice in all language skills and the use to practice many types of communication which is in line with the objectives of the teaching skill.

II. DISCUSSION

The method used in this study is Classroom Action Research (CAR). The study addresses how writing games improve acceleration students' writing narrative achievement, also observe how students' behavior during playing the games and also the teacher on conducting the games along the research.

The researcher uses classroom action research because it is an approach of improving education through change, by encouraging teachers to be aware of their own practice, to be critical to the practice, and to be prepared to change it.

Classroom Action Research is a systematic inquiry with the goal of informing practice in particular situation (Angelo and Cross, 1993: 1). It means that classroom action research is a way for instructors or teachers to discover what works best in their own classroom situation, thus allowing informed decision about teaching. Furthermore, Corey (1993: 1) defined action research as the process through which practitioners study their own practice to solve their personal practical problems. It means that action research is a collaborative

activity where practitioners work together to help one another design and carry out investigation in their classrooms.

In addition, Kemmis and Mc. Taggart (1982, 3) stated that action research is deliberate, solution-oriented investigation that is group or personally owned and conducted. It is characterized by spiraling cycles of problem identification, systematic data collection, reflection, analysis, data-driven action taken, and finally problem redefinition. The linking of term "action" and "research" highlights the essential features of this method; trying out ideas in practice as means of increasing knowledge.

From 20 students in the class, the result of questionnaire depicted that all students were interested in the games and agreed that the games assisted them to write. Moreover, discussing with friends help them much to create and bear their imagination.

Thus, the result of students' writing narratives showed that 32% students got score between 82-85, 21% students had 90, 42% students got 92-95, and 5% students got 100. Compared with their achievement in the previous grade, it was 70% students had 82-85 and 30% students got 86-88, it can be concluded that writing games have increased their achievement on writing narrative in 56,7%.

TWO CYCLES OF THE RESEARCH

First Cycle

Planning:

In planning stage, I set a lesson plan which integrated with writing and speaking skills and chose "Silly Story" as the game. The game focuses on students' ability on constructing a simple sentence in terms of the use of past tense. The sentences will be gained into a short story with unpredictable ending.

Action:

In this stage, I brainstormed students' about narrative that they had learned in the previous grade. Most students knew it as a legend or bedtime stories. After that, I stated that they were going to play a game and all of them were excited to hear it. I divided them into four groups with five students in each and assigned them to sit in a small circle. I gave each group a piece of paper and a simple sentence: *I want to share my story/experience,* and asked them to continue the sentence by their own words. One student must write a sentence followed by others but they were not allowed to discuss about their upcoming sentence. They were given 40 minutes to do it and I observed the way of their writings. I pointed some grammatical mistakes on their writings and did some corrections. At the end, I asked the groups to present their stories in front.

From four groups, only one which was less active on that game and while the others created so much fascinating stories, it was only just like that. However, they were delighted with the game and asked me for some more.

Reflection:

I assumed that the finding of the odd group appeared for they could not work in a big group and they were hardly to create or even imagine on their own. I also found some grammatical mistakes on their writings and seemed that some of their writings system merely translated from their mother language.

Second Cycle

Planning:

Based on the result of the first one, I did set my narrative text entitled "The Howling Halloween" and a lesson plan which it integrated speaking, listening and writing as well. I would change the way of grouping and apply a different game; it

was "What's Next?". The game focuses on students' ability on making a simple paragraph.

Action:

I wrote a word "Halloween" and asked what the students' minds on it/. Most students related it with spooky movies, stories and ghosts but there was also related it with traditional event and pumpkins. I stated that they would play a game. All students were happy and curious what it was about. I divided them into a ten groups with two students in each and asked them to continue my story with any endings they wanted.

When I read the story, all students were silent and stick to it. But when I stopped reading, they were so busy to discuss what the ending would be. They worked hard to make the best one as I walked to observe their writings. They were given 45 minutes to write the endings. At last, they were asked to present their stories and all students laughed and enjoyed each other stories.

Reflection:

All of the students were involved in the game and they enjoyed it much working in pair. They were more confident to write and their writings also more interesting. The stories were enjoyable and imaginative that they made students entertained.

Post Cycle:

At the end of the research, I asked them to fill in my questionnaire to find out their perceptions on the games and assigned them to write a parody of a famous story with their own words and plot of story. They did it in the class in two meetings. In the first meeting, they were gathered making a rough draft in order to make what the story they were going to write, and in the second one they

started writing their own story based on their draft. They were free if they wanted to put some pictures on it in order to support their story.

III. CONCLUSION

Since the research ran in three months started from November until January 2017, it is concluded that acceleration students were interested with writing games and involved in it well. The text which was used by the teacher was easy and simple so that the students could comprehend it and was being entertained. The students themselves were interested listen to other stories and they felt confident in writing.

However, during the research, especially in the first cycle, there was still one group was less active in "Silly Story" because they could not discuss each other and the group was quite big. The games have not triggered much to improve their achievement, only 56.7%, for some possibilities; time of research and the background of the students.

The upcoming research is suggested to be hold in longer period in order to increase and catch the better result and the games are also suggested to be applied in different sample, for example regular students, to find out how writing games improve the students and how effective the games support and motivate them to write.

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