IMPROVING STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN WRITING NARRATIVE TEXT THROUGH CUBING TECHNIQUE

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ABSTRACT

This study aims at improving the students' achievement in writing narrative text through cubing technique. The underlying objective of this study is to investigate whether teaching narrative by applying cubing technique potentially improves students' skill. The research was conducted by using Classroom Action Research (CAR). The population was the 2012-2013 eleven grade students of SMA Negeri 3 Binjai. The number of students was 42, consisting of females and males. The procedure of the research was administrated into two cycles where each cycle consisted of three meetings. Each meeting included four steps namely: planning, action, observation, and reflection. There were two kinds of data collected during the study, qualitative and quantitative data. The instrument for collecting the qualitative data was the writing of narrative test while the qualitative data were gathered by using interview, diary notes and observation sheet. Based on the data analysis, the mean of students' score in Test I was 61.85; for the Test II was 73.85, and for the Test III was 80. The qualitative data showed that the students were interested in the applying of cubing technique. The conclusion is that the application of cubing technique in writing narrative improves the students' achievement in writing narrative.

Keywords: achievement, writing, narrative, cubing technique

INTRODUCTION

Writing is a very important capability for being owned by students, writing is also an excellent communication tool. Through writing, each person will be able to convey feelings, ideas, and announcements to others. Sharples (1999) actually, writing is an opportunity; it allows students to express something about themselves, explore and explain ideas. Students can convey their ideas in their mind by organizing them into a good text so that the others know them and they can think critically. Therefore, learning is very important for improved writing in particular learning of English in Indonesia because the writing is a process of transformation of thoughts and ideas into tangible forms of writing. In addition, many people choose writing. In, addition, many people choose writing as a means of effective and efficient communication of information to be conveyed in some ways like posting letters, business letters, and important information in a company's product.

In the *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan* (KTSP) 2006 syllabus of junior and senior high schools curriculum require students to be able to write some kind of

genre in writing. They are narrative, recount, descriptive, report, explanation, analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, procedure, discussion, reviews, anecdote, spoof, and news items.

Based on the opinions, the narrative text is one genre that must be mastered by students in learning English. And theoretically, according to Conlin (1983: 352), narrative is made of development used by the writer to tell a story or to give an account of historical or factual event

In fact, not all students are able to write narrative text properly and in accordance with the existing elements in the narrative text. Based on the researcher's observation at the time of the teaching practice program (PPL) contained 75% of students who were unable to write a narrative paragraph and at Senior High School grade eleventh were many students who got problems in writing narrative text scores. The mean of their writing score was just 61, 72 from 32 students. From the mean of writing score there were 7 students got the score 7, 5, and 20 students got 60 then 5 students got 50. It means just 21,875 % students who passed the writing narrative test.

Teachers of English had taught the material to students well but the students still had the problem in writing narrative text. In addition, the researcher also had looked the teachers of English language teaching by lecture, and then asked the students to write narrative text individually.

From the opinions, student's ability to write narrative text was very less because the learning method that was adopted by teacher of English language was a method that does not fit anymore in this day because it reduced the interest and liveliness of the students in the learning process so that students were bored and did not want to continue learning as they should.

At this present time, there are implementations Learning Revolution in teaching and learning that is learning is no longer centered on teachers and using only the handbook for teaching. On the other hand, teachers in now days do not need to teach the students by lecturing and then ask then to write the narrative text, it will make the students become bored. The teacher must be creative to create a good media for teaching so that the students are happy to get the study and also make them easy to understand.

Based on the opinions, the researcher offered a good media that had to be applied in the learning process of writing narrative text. The media is cubing, Cubing can be used in different ways. It can be used to initiate free writing where students are given three to five minutes to explore each of the six given perspectives. This prewriting activity helps students initially probe a topic, determine what they know, and query what needs to be given further thought and study (Duckart, 2006). Another prewriting use for cubing is, by exploring multiple perspectives, students determine the most interesting slant for an essay or thesis. Cubing can also be used as an assessment tool for teachers to evaluate the degree to which students understand a topic or book. Perspectives contained on the cubes that prove problematic for students can then be developed and discussed as a class. Teachers can also use this as they reflect on what perspectives they are ignoring in the classroom or what stances they, themselves, are not exploring.

Based on the explanation before, the use of cubing is expect to be one of effective learning materials and media in teaching that can significantly improve students' achievement in writing narrative text.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Theoretical Framework

1. Writing

Writing is a process of formulating and organizing ideas in right words to deliver the aim and present them on a piece of paper. According to Jones in R. Cooper and Odell (1977:33) writing is synonymous with discourse, and discourse will be discussed in terms of its aims, it relates to the function of language, and in terms of its feature, which are the separate elements, devices, and mechanism of language.

On the other hand, Reinking, Hard and Osten (1993:188) state that writing is a way of communication and of course communicates all the time. And then Deporter and Heracki (2002:179) explain that writing is a whole brain activity, which use bright brain side (emotion) and left brain side (logic). Although right and left brain sides are used in writing, right brain side has a big position because it is a place which appears new ideas and emotion.

From the explanation above, we can state that writing is a whole brain activity to formulate and organize ideas in right words to deliver and communicate the aims to the reader and present it on a piece of paper.

2. Genre

Genre is a form of text which describes the general of the text. Generally, the writing text can be divided into narrative, descriptive, news item, expository and argumentative text.

According to Gerot and Wignel (1994:190-219) that genre is one of the most important and influential concepts in language. A genre can be defined as a culturally specific text-type which result from using language (written or spoken) to help accomplish something, the kinds of the text (genre) are descriptive, narrative, recount, procedure, news item, spoof, hortatory exposition, report etc.

This study only focuses on the narrative writing.

3. Narrative Text

Narration is any written English text in which the writer wants to amuse, to entertain people, and to deal with actual or vicarious experience in different ways (Siahaan & Shinoda, 2008: 73). According to Conlin (1983: 352), narrative is made of development used by the writer to tell a story or to give an account of historical or factual event. Usually after reading a narrative text, the reader is entertained and caught the purpose of the story or the advice explicitly stated from the story.

Generic Structure and Grammatical Features of Narrative Text

1) The generic structure of descriptive text:

a. Orientation: sets the scene (what seemed to problematic, when it happened), introduces the participants and personal attitudes (what the author thinks of the 'what')
b. Evaluation: a stepping back to evaluate the plight, usually to make the story more interesting (this element contains of sequence of events which talk about the activity or even in the past).
c. Complication: a crisis arises; the complication can be one or more.
d. Resolution: the crises is resolved (problem-solving), for better or for worse
e. Re-orientation (optional): a brief summary which is aimed to give or submit a moral lesson to the reader.

2) Grammatical features
   a) Action verbs, for example;
      One day the man and his son *went collecting* fire-wood. They *saw* a golden tree. They *went* slowly over to the tree. When they *got* closer to the tree they *heard* a voice *coming* from the tree.
   b) Temporal connectives, for example;
      We *then* looked at some games and equipment. *After* lunch we walked up to the *Sydney Morning Herald* and saw how they make papers. *After* that we caught the train back to Mauriceville.

1. Cubing Technique

Cubing is a technique that helps students thin at different level of the taxonomy while allowing them to consider a subject from six points of view. Cubing works well when students are locked into a particular way of thinking. It allows students to look at an issue or topic from a variety of angles and to develop multidimensional perspectives. Cubes can be differentiated by readiness, interest or learning style in order to engage all students. Cubing enables you to consider your topic from six different directions; just as a cube is six-sided, your cubing brainstorming will result in six "sides" or approaches to the topic. Take a sheet of paper, consider your topic, and respond to these six commands.

Cubing (Cowan & Cowan, 1980) is a technique that helps students approach reading and writing from different perspectives. Rather than giving the typical, perfunctory recount of a book or content area chapter, students can learn with the simple roll of a cube from *perspectives* such as compare, associate, analyze, apply, evaluate, and satirize. Just as a cube has six sides, students are asked to explore topics using up to six different points of view.

2. Cubing Technique in Teaching about Narrative Writing

Through cubing, (Cowan & Cowan, 1980) this technique is designed to support students in concept development after studying a specific topic. Cubing requires students to construct meaning about a topic from six different perspectives:
Description: What is it like?

Comparison: What is it similar to or different from?

Association: What does it make you think of?

Analysis: How is it made or what are its different parts?

Application: What can you do with it? How is it used?

Argumentation: Take a stand arguing for it or against it.

Teacher begins by modeling the cubing process with a familiar topic. Then students are given their assigned topic and do guided practice in small groups or with a partner with time allotted (3-5 minutes) to write on each side of the cube. Cubing can also be used as an individual assessment activity after studying a specific unit of instruction. it is hoped that the students can be easily express their ideas by giving a good grammatical order way and increase their competence in writing so the students will be better in writing narrative text.

The example of cubing :
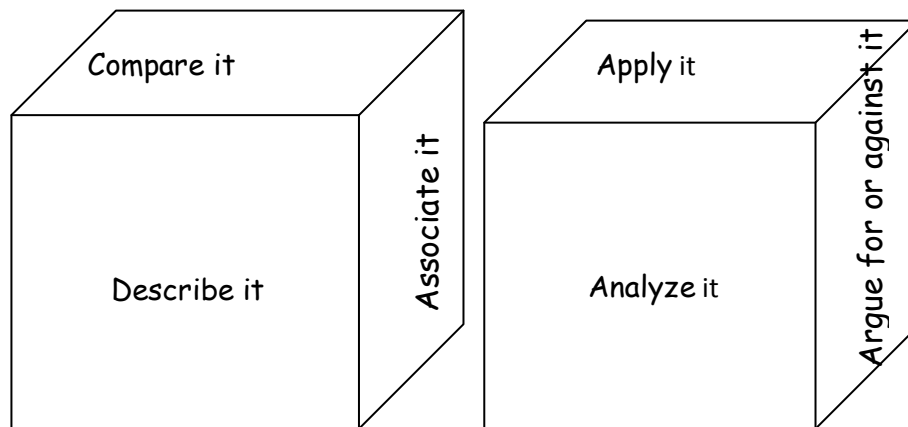
Comprehending information from narrative or expository text requires students to become aware of and practice looking at ideas from multiple perspectives; they must become involved in "active questioning, practice trying out ideas, and rethinking what they thought they knew" (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p. 21). For example, the authors suggest a six-sided view of understanding that includes explaining, interpreting, applying, having perspective, empathizing, and developing self-knowledge. Additional models and taxonomies list other categories of thinking, all moving students beyond recalling facts to critically thinking about topics and information. Students can be taught how to examine different topics using strategies such as cubing, to practice and develop such higher order-thinking skills.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research was conducted as an action research procedure since involved a substantive act with a research procedure to find the improvement. Stringer (2007:1) maintains that action research is systematic approach to investigation that enables people to find effective solutions to problems they confront in their everyday life.

Action research is focused on specific situations and localized solutions. Action research is provided the means by which people in schools, business and community organizations; teachers; and health and human services may increase the effectiveness of the work in which they are engaged.

Furthermore, Aqib, Maftuh, Sujak & Kawentar (2008:3) state that action research is research that is done by the teacher in his/her class through reflection of his/herself with the aim for preparing the effort so that the students' achievement can be improved.

The Instrument for collecting Data

This study uses two types' of data, namely quantitative and qualitative. According to Wallace (1998), the quantitative data is broadly used to describe what can be measured or counted and therefore be considered. In collecting the quantitative data, the writer conducts written test that is writing narrative text. The test is given in every meeting and the researcher observes the improvement of their score every meeting. The qualitative data is collected by using diary note containing the writer's personal evaluation about the class, the progress of the project and the material that was given to the students. Next, by using observation sheet and interview sheet, the researcher investigated the situation and the problems found during the teaching and learning process.

The Technique of Data Collection

The study applied qualitative and quantitative data. In Laia's quotation, Wallace (1998:38) stated that qualitative data are used to describe data that were not able to be counted or measured in an objective way, and therefore it was subjective.

This research was applied qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data were analyzed through diary noted, interview and observation. The result of qualitative data is transcription of the activity of the students and teacher in classroom. From the transcription, the researcher was described the students' comments, attitude and activity in the classroom. The quantitative data are analyzed by collecting the score of writing test. In collecting the quantitative data, the researcher was take the students' score of writing narrative text test. In this research the researcher compared the students' score from the first meeting to second meeting, third meeting to fourth meeting and fifth meeting to sixth meeting. The mean of the students' score in second, fourth and sixth meeting was taken to show the improvement of students' writing skill. The result of qualitative and quantitative data was combined and explained by the researcher.

$$\overline{X} = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

Where:

$\overline{X}$ = the mean of students' score

$\sum x$ = total score

N = the total number of student

To categorize the number of master student, the following formula is applied.

$$P = \frac{R}{T} x100\%$$

Where:

      P = Percentage of student getting score 75

      R = Number of student getting score 75

      T = The total number of student taking the test

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results indicated that there were improvements on the students' writing by using Cubing technique. It was supported by the fact that the mean of the score in every cycle was increased, and also could be seen from the mean of the score and from the percentage of the students' writing improvement that the tests got the higher gradually, the mean in the orientation test was 61.85, the mean in the Cycle I test was 73,85, and the mean in the Cycle II test was 80, and the percentages as follows the orientation test was 9,52%, Cycle 1 was 35,71%, and Cycle II was 71,42%.

The qualitative data were taken from the interview, diary notes, questionnaire, and from observation sheet showed that students' participation in this study increased from meeting to meeting.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

After analyzing the data, it was found that the students' score increased from Cycle I namely from first meeting until fourth meeting and Cycle II namely from fifth meeting until sixth meeting. In all the meetings, it showed that the students got improvement in writing narrative text by using Cubing technique. The mean of the students' score in Cycle II was 80 which higher than the mean of students' score in Cycle I was 73,85, and then the mean of orientation test was 61.85. it also provided by the observation sheet's result, interview, questionnaire, and diary notes results indicated the improvement in teaching-learning process from Cycle I to Cycle II. Based on the data, the conclusion was that teaching by using Cubing technique can improve students' writing.

B. Suggestion

Based on the conclusion drawn, the results of the findings show valuable contribution for those who are interested in teaching writing, especially:

1. To the English teachers:
   It is good to apply Cubing technique in teaching writing so that it can make students easier to understand the various kinds of writing materials.
2. To the students:
   It is suggested to use relevant topic to conduct the father by using Cubing technique. The students can enjoy in the teaching and learning process.
3. To the readers:
   It is expected the readers to get some valuable information on writing by using Cubing technique. It also becomes one inspiration to get more information.

4. To other researcher would like to conduct a study in-dept would be appreciated.

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