
The Use of Guided Writing and Sequences of Pictures as Teaching Technique to Enhance the Ability of Writing Narrative of Students in “Different English Course”

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Abstract

Although many techniques are used to improve the writing ability of students, very few studies have investigated the nature of guided writing and sequences of pictures techniques. This present study set out to investigate the use of guided writing and sequences of pictures as teaching techniques to enhance students' writing ability in narrative at “Different English course”. The action research was used for this study. Three cycles of action research were implemented in this study. Pre-test and post-tests were conducted to monitor the students' writing improvement. Using Jacobs et al's (1981) ESL Composition Profile, improvement in students' writing was analysed analytically. Based on test results, the mean of post-test was higher than the mean score of pre-test. Therefore, it can be concluded that guided writing and sequences of pictures can improve the students' writing ability. This improvement of the students' writing ability included: a) students enhanced their writing ability in organization and language use, and based on their views to the techniques and b) they chose sequences of pictures as technique which mostly gave contributions to their narrative writing.

Keywords: Second Language Writing; Guided Writing; Sequences of Pictures; Narrative Writing; Teaching Writing Technique

1. Introduction

English education in Indonesia involves various skills. As Haycraft stated (1978, p. 8) there are various abilities in mastering English: receptive skill, which are listening (understanding the spoken language), reading (understanding the written language), and productive skills such as speaking and writing. Receptive skills are those that involve active participation on the part of their reader or listener (Litz, 2000, p. 25). Therefore, the productive skills are speaking and writing, because learners doing these need to produce language. They are also known as active skills.

Because writing is considered as ability to make essay, students need to express the meaning of essay in the form of report, narrative and analytical exposition in the context of everyday life (Depdiknas, 2006). However, this study focused on narrative writing and the definition can be found in the statement of Sofyan (1999) that narrative is a story which is connected with the events based on developed plot (p. 86). In addition, guided writing and sequences of pictures are considered as the techniques which enhance the student ability. Guided writing is the guidance from teachers by way of asking questions, pictures, cues etc. (Patel & Jain, 2008, p. 130). Moreover, sequences of pictures can be used to stimulate and guide students writing or they can be cut up and given to different students who work out story (Wright, 1989, p. 201). Therefore, the aims of this study are to find out whether guided writing and sequences of pictures enhanced the narrative writing ability of students or not, to find out the process of guided writing and sequences of pictures used in students writing ability and to find out the views' of students about the teaching techniques in “Different English Course”.

Several studies discuss writing ability in students. Anderson (1982) conducted a study in the cognitive processes that can help students acquire their writing skills. Then, a study conducted by Johnstone, Ashbaugh, and Warfield (2002), which applied Anderson's method, developed an intensive writing curriculum for college aged students that stressed repeated practice and time spent

on writing instruction over a four semester periods. Besides that, in national area, Sundari (2011) conducted a study that used the picture as the facility to enhance students writing skill in composing descriptive text. Different from those studies, this study focused on the narrative writing ability and the use of guided writing and sequences of pictures in informal private English course.

2. Literature Review

The subject of this study, narrative writing is a story tells or describes an action in the past time clearly (Keraf, 2001, p.136). Narrative places occurrences in time and tells what happened according to natural time sequences (Wishon & Julia, 1980). According to Sudarwati and Grace, (2006, p. 154) narratives has the purpose to entertain the reader with a story that deals with complications or problematic events which lead to a crisis and in turn finds a resolution. Sudarwati and Grace (2006, p. 154) added that narrative has several generic structures which are:

1. Orientation: the scene, characters, when and where the story begin
2. Complication: the problems arouse in story
3. Resolution: the problems are being solved
4. Re-orientation: moral lessons from the writer
5. Evaluation: Judgment of writer toward certain characters

As technique, guided writing can be explained in Harmon's (1994) statement: "If understanding is low, the teacher inserts extra explanatory comments as appropriate and strives to make subsequent words easy enough so students do come to understand" (pp. 44-45). On the other hand, Hyland (2002) stated in his statement that the teacher may give the model language to help the student in composition their writing. He added that guided writing is the model of language provided by a functional approach to teaching helps to identify children's strengths and to make clear suggestions as to how they can make their texts more effective (p. 103). Technically, it is the technique which is used often begin with guided writing exercises and gradually move toward freer writing once the learner has memorized the structures to be followed. (Richards, 1990, p. 107).

Regarding sequences of pictures, Wright (1989, p. 138) stated that the use of appropriate pictures in the introduction of new language can speed the process by which students assimilate meaning. This fact actually involves the ability of students. Therefore, pictures can help students to develop their ability to learn foreign language (Wright, 1989, p. 2). In addition, the sequences of pictures or cartoon strips and instruction strips of pictures are potentially useful. The pictures can be kept as they are and used to contextualise a story or description of a process. Furthermore, the use of appropriate pictures in the introduction of new language can speed the process by which students assimilate meaning. This fact actually involves the ability of students. Pictures can help students to develop their ability to learn foreign language (Wright, 1989, p. 2).

In analytic scoring, scripts are rated on several aspects of writing or criteria rather than given a single score like holistic scoring do (Weigle, 2002, p. 114). One of analytic scoring was proposed by Jacobs, Holly, Stephen, Zinggraf, Deanne, Wormuth, Faye, Jane, and Hughey (1981). Jacobs et al (1981) rated the scripts based on five aspects of other analytical scales of writing composition which are: content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. This scoring has been used widely to score the second language learners composition and the use of this scoring is efficient compared to the other scorings.

In addition, Jacobs, et al (1981) differentiated five aspects: content is weighed 30 points, language use is 25 points, organization and vocabulary are weighed 20 points, and mechanics is weighed 5 points. These are criteria:

Aspect	Level	Criteria
Content	30 – 27	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: knowledgeable, substantive, thorough development of thesis, relevant to assigned topic.
	26 – 22	GOOD TO AVERAGE: some knowledge of the subject, adequate range, limited development of thesis lacks of detail, mostly relevant the topic.
	21 – 18	FAIR TO POOR: limited knowledge, little substances, in adequate development of thesis.
	16 – 13	VERY POOR: does not show knowledge of subject, non-substantive, not pertinent.
Organization	20 – 18	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: fluent expression, ideas clearly stated/ supported, succinct, well organized, logical sequencing, cohesive.

	17 – 14 13 – 10 9 – 7	GOOD TO AVERAGE: somewhat choppy, loosely organized but main ideas stand out, limited support, logical but incomplete sequencing. FAIR TO POOR: non-fluent, ideas confused or disconnected lacks of logical sequencing and development. VERY POOR: does not communicate, no organization, or not enough to evaluate
Vocabulary	20-18 17-14 13-10 9-7	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: sophisticated range, effective word/ idiom choice and usage, word form mastery, appropriate register. GOOD TO AVERAGE: adequate range, occasional errors of word/ idiom form, choice, usage but meaning not obscured. FAIR TO POOR: limited range, frequent errors of word/ idiom form, choice, usage, meaning confused or obscured VERY POOR: essentially translation, little knowledge of English vocabulary, idioms, word form, OR not enough to evaluate.
Language Use	25-22 21-18 17-11 10-5	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: effective complex construction, few errors agreement, tense, number, word order/ function, articles, pronouns, preposition. GOOD TO AVERAGE: effective but simple construction, minor problems in complex construction, several errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/ function, articles, pronouns, prepositions but meaning seldom obscured. FAIR TO POOR: major problems in simple/complex construction, frequent errors of negation, agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions and/or fragments, run-ons, deletions, meaning confused or obscured. VERY POOR: virtually no mastery of sentence construction rules, dominated by errors, does not communicate, OR not enough to evaluate
Mechanics	5 4 3 2	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: demonstrates mastery of conventions, few errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing. GOOD TO AVERAGE: occasional errors of spelling, punctuation, paragraphing but meaning not obscured FAIR TO POOR: frequent errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, poor handwriting, meaning confused or obscured. VERY POOR: mastery of conventions, dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, handwriting illegible, OR not enough to evaluate.

Table 1 Jacobs et al's (1981) analytic scoring profile

3. Method

The Action Research approach was used in this study. Because the researcher was also the teacher in this case, the best approach for this is Action Research approach. Johnson (1992) stated that teacher involvement in research is an effective way to bridge the gaps between theory and practice and contribute to knowledge (p. 212). Because teachers are so close to students on a daily basis, their own inquiry from their technique perspectives can make an important contribution to knowledge about teaching and learning (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990; Miller, 1990). It is very focused on individual or small-group professional practice and is not so concerned with making general statement (Wallace, 1998, p. 18). The qualitative approach was applied as supporting approach for this study also. Qualitative approach for this study can explain the student's English writing skill in detail. Descriptive way to describe the English writing development can reveal their second language (L2) development. The participants for this study were students who took English writing course in Different English Course Surabaya.

3.1 Process of Action Research

Related with the action research for this study, there were total of three cycles. The process of those three cycles is defined in these steps: the students were given the pre-test, and after the teacher knew the pre-test result, the students had a treatment of guided writing. After the treatment, first post-test was conducted. After that, a second treatment of sequences of pictures was given. The questionnaires were used to do reflective stages as requirement of action research. From questionnaires, third cycle was applied which was the treatment of combined guided writing and sequences of pictures. The last but not the least, second post-test was conducted. In the last stage, the students were interviewed and required to do verbal report.

3.2 Data Analysis

The students' compositions were analysed using analytic scoring. Analytic scoring is useful for second-language learners, who are more likely to show a marked or uneven profile across different

aspects of writing (Weigle, 2002, p. 120). For example, a composition which students made may be quite well developed, but have numerous grammatical errors or a composition may demonstrate an admirable control of syntax but have little or no content. One of the analytic scoring was proposed by Jacobs, Holly, Stephen, Zinggraf, Deanne, Wormuth, Faye, Jane, and Hughey (1981). Jacobs et al rated the scripts based on five aspects of other analytical scales of writing composition which are: content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. Content is weighed 30 points, language use is 25 points, organization and vocabulary are weighed 20 points, and mechanics is weighed 5 points.

Therefore, to see the development of students, the exercises per meeting in treatments were also analysed. Then, transcription of students' interview were also analysed to draw conclusion of their views to guided writing and sequences of pictures.

4. Discussion

This part is divided into two which are finding and interpretation of finding. Findings cover Jacobs et al's analytic scoring analysis and students' views to the techniques. In the interpretation of finding, it discusses the finding in this study.

4.1 Findings

This table present the results of pre-test, first post-test and second post-test in analytic scoring, the table gives the results of pre-test, first post-test and second post-test. The mean of five categories, including the overall score is presented.

	Pre-Test	First Post-Test	Second Post-test
	Mean	Mean	Mean
Overall	70.00	79.71	85.71
Content (30)	22.00	24.71	25.85
Organization (20)	13.14	15.71	17.14
Vocabulary (20)	13.71	14.85	17.00
Language Use (25)	16.85	20.00	21.00
Mechanics (5)	4.28	4.85	4.71

Table 2 Results concerning the Jacobs et al scoring

From the table, it can be seen that mean value increased in each test. It actually shows that student's narrative writing ability improved. The most significant increases were organization and language use. The overall score of pre-test is 70.00. However in first post-test, it increased sharply to 79.71, in second post-test, it went up considerably to 85.71. On other hand, the treatments applied were successful to enhance students' ability.

The last analysis, the students' views to the guided writing and sequences of pictures as techniques showed vivid pictures of the result of two treatments applied in this study. Six out of seven students chose sequences of pictures as the technique enhancing their narrative writing ability; therefore, there was only one student choosing guided writing as the technique to enhance her narrative writing ability. The reason why the six students chose sequences of pictures could be found clearly when sequences of pictures help the students to imagine the plot and the story, moreover, it helped them to have additional ideas which they could apply to their narrative writing.

4.2 Interpretation of the Findings

Guided writing techniques helped the student to made more correct sentences and mixed it together into one or more complex sentences. In addition, Guided writing provided grammatical aspect which students applied in their composition, especially in sentence combining.

In other way, Hsu (2009) demonstrated the advantage of sequences of pictures in such comparisons. He found that test takers or students produced longer texts and more phrases in a verbal direction as a prompt for a personal experience narrative. Hsu's finding was related with this study because it indicated that sequences of pictures are particularly valuable as elicitation prompts.

Furthermore, the role of guided writing in student language features and grammatical structure could be compared with Frodesen statement. He stated that guided writing serves to focus students' attention on language features that are difficult for them. In addition, he added that exercises eliciting the use of grammatical structures can encourage learners to expand their linguistic resources. In fact, students are much more receptive to grammar-based guided writing that offers them new ways of expressing their ideas (Frodesen, 2011 cited in Celce-Murcia, p. 240). Cumming (1990, p. 483) wrote that: "Composition writing elicits an attention to form-meaning relations that may prompt learners to refine their linguistic expression – and hence their control over their linguistic knowledge." In other word, the guided writing just helped them to apply grammatical aspect without giving language features which narrative writing has.

Organization and language use were the most significant results. Analytic scoring, in general, experienced improvement from pre-test to second post-test, hereafter, Sundari (2011) and Ikhsan (2009) also found that pictures can develop the organization of students' composition. They stated that pictures were effective to improve the organization in student writing composition but less effective to improve vocabulary, and mechanics. It happened because pictures contribute to the context that students have to write about (Wright, 1989). Moreover, pictures guide the students to what kind of information that they should put on their paragraphs and made their paragraph more fluent.

Based on those findings, they can show that the answer to the first research question, whether guided writing and sequences of pictures help students to enhance their narrative writing ability, is yes.

The last, from this paragraph, the second research question is what the students' views to Guided Writing and to sequences of pictures for their narrative writing composition ability, was discussed. Students chose the sequences of pictures because pictures provide them with the story and the plot, so they could get additional ideas and developed the plot with their creativity. Sequences of pictures equipped them with basic information about the story, and then students developed it. On the other hand, students considered guided writing as the technique giving contribution through the extensive writing task. It merely helped students in vocabulary and made the students produce more complex sentences by combining the sentences into the complex sentences. The last but not least, it has to be said that more research is needed, particularly studies focused on the speaking, reading, and listening skills, which would give us broader picture of teaching English.

5. Conclusion

This study investigated the use of guided writing and sequences of pictures as techniques in seven students of writing course program. The aim of this study using action research as the approach are clearly stated: to investigate that guided writing and sequences of pictures could successfully enhance the student writing ability, especially in narrative writing, and to discover which techniques that students most likely considered as tool to enhance their narrative writing ability.

The study which had been conducted in "Different English Course" from 24th January to 17th May 2012 showed that the techniques of guided writing and sequences of pictures, made the students' improvement in organization, and language use. It could be concluded that sequences of pictures had its role to enhance organization and language use aspects; meanwhile, guided writing improved the language use. Secondly, regarding to these two techniques, guided writing and sequences of pictures, the study obviously stated that students chose sequences of pictures as the technique assisting them to compose narrative writing by providing plot and story so they could understand the various generic structures of narrative.

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