Organizing blog as student's diary:
A teacher's strategy to teach writing a recount text to junior high school students

Al Araf Amala
Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia
Alaraf.amala@gmail.com

Abstract

Internet is one of the on-line media that can be accessible for everybody in any places and moment. The development of this technology (IPTEK) gives positive impacts to education, especially in English writing class. In addition, some Junior High Schools and Senior High Schools have already got the multimedia room equipped by computer and internet connection. One of the ways to improve the students' writing quality and the ability to write is through utilizing IPTEK development by organizing Blog (on-line journal). Blog is an on-line journal where the students can write anything that they are interested in, edit their writing and publish it, and even make a sharing media for their members. It hopes that writing through organizing blog will create a real and potential audience to improve the students' writing, innovation, exploration, and better creation to give a better dynamic interaction, a better literacy, and even a better development work in team. This paper explains how to organize the on-line writing media such as blog to improve the students' writing ability. The paper begins to explain about some problems faced by teachers at schools and theories of writing, diary, and blog. It also explains about the model of teaching writing through blog. The writer hopes that this technique can be applied and therefore it can help the teacher to teach writing in the class as away to improve their writing ability.

Keywords: Teaching Writing; Classroom Blog; Recount Text; Student's Diary

1. INTRODUCTION

In the latest curriculum, writing skill is placed in the same position with other skills. It indicates that none of those skills is better than the others. Writing is a comprehensive ability that involves some aspects such as grammar and vocabulary because through writing people can show their knowledge acquisition in many areas, such as social, science, culture, economics and politics and demonstrate their ideas, thoughts, and feelings in order to communicate with other people through media of paper.

However, the fact shows that, the problems in writing class are emerged from both students and teacher, such as the methods, students' motivation and their willingness to study. Teachers are still using the conventional method where they are lecturing, then ask students to write and give correction to students' wtiting. Most teachers do not follow the writing process, which are outlining, drafting, writing, revising, and publishing, in writing activity. As what have been discussed by Zeng (1999), he states that in writing activity, teachers just focus on grammar mistake. They are interested in checking student's mistake than explaining how to make a good text.

Next problem is giving feedback. Feedback is one of the most important things in writing activity. However, in real situation there is no feedback among students and teacher in writing activity. So, there is still only a comment from the teacher, there is no feedback among them. Students do not know what happen with their writing after collecting it to the teacher.

Students' creativity and innovation is another problem in writing class. Creativity and innovation is also important in writing activity. The problem is the teacher is not encouraged student's creativity and innovation by doing the same way in every writing class. The student's creativity and innovation often limited by the restricted topic given by the teacher. So, it is lack of challenging and exploring their ideas.

Another problem is that the students are lack of motivation. Motivation is an important internal factor of a person to have a better effort, and get a better result. Student with lack of motivation is another problem in writing class. Lack of opportunity to be creative, lack of understanding and training activities that support

and lack of technology used in the English department may be the causes of low quality and motivation of learning English. In learning process in the classroom, students more often tend to be relaxed and not active in learning. So, their writing do not reached the standard that stated by curriculum.

Since School Based Curriculum was implemented in 2006, students are expected to be able to write different kind of text. Each genre has characteristics that differentiate each other and it is arranged in certain arrangement. It has different social function, generic structures, and language features. Among those genres to be taught, there are five genres that have to be mastered for Junior High School students. They are recounts, narrative, procedure, descriptive and report text.

One of the texts that should be taught by junior high school students is the recount text. Recount text describes and retells the experience for informing and entertaining the readers. This text has a social function, generic structure and significant lexico grammatical feature. The social function or purpose of the recount text is to list and described past experience by retelling events in order in which they happened. This text has generic structure; orientation, series of events, and reorientation. The recount text also has significant lexico grammatical feature: they are use of past tense, specific participants, and action also linking items to do with time.

.Recount Text is used as the topic because it is the most frequently text which used in daily life than the other texts. For example is writing the diary. Some students like to write their daily experiences in a diary. It can help students to develop their writing especially in writing Recount text. It is an easy task for students to write it, because they just write about what they have done in a day. So, the writer thinks that writing a diary is an interesting topic to be explored.

Diary is a kind of notebook that used to write the events that do every time. A diary can be used for some interesting events and important dates. In a diary, students can write whatever they want. They do not have to think about the formality of the writing, but the fluency of ideas the most important one. In other words, writing diary is good to help students to generate the ideas. The content of diary consists of data, day, and date. Writing in a diary begins with the activities, feeling, idea, plan and so on. The students are not required to write grammatical sentences in their diary. They are encouraged to write the things they are interested about.

Based on the problems stated above, there are several innovation in educational system appeared in order to improve quality of English Learning Process. As the advanced of information and communication technology in educational system, especially in English Learning, it can be used by the teacher in their class. According to Sei-Hwa (2006), information and communication technology can be one of the English Learning media that gives sense of creativity, innovation and off course sense of happy for the students.

As the advance of the information and communication technology today, there are several online media that can be used by the teacher as the Teaching Media such as Blog, webpage, social networking system (facebook, instagram, etc.) which can improve student's ability in English skill especially in writing. Related to improving students writing ability, blog has suitable characteristic with writing learning process.

On *Webopedia*, an online encyclopedia dedicated to computer technology, blog is defined as "Short for Web log, a blog is a web page that serves as a publicly accessible personal journal for an individual." Blog has many functions for each different individual, such as a diary, as a media for promotion or champagne for a victory or a politician and also as media to share certain information such as medical information, etc. Almost every individual has organized a blog, such as artist, teacher, politician, and even students because it is easy to make.

In using blog as online journal media in writing learning process, hoped it can improve students writing ability. And the improvement of their writing ability is hoped can ended up in improvement in mastering all English skills such as listening, speaking, and reading and language components such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and others.

2. RECOUNT TEXT

Recount text is one of types of the texts which are expected can be mastered by the students. Through this text, we are using language to keep the past alive and help us to interpret experiences and arrange them in sequential order. As Derewianka (1990: 14) states that a recount text is the unfolding of a sequence of

events over time. And Plum (2004: 33) adds that recount is concerned with a series of events, typically considered a single incident.

Seaton (2000) states the purpose of recount text is recount text is essential to list and describe past experiences by retelling events in chronological order in which they happened and also recounts are written to retell events with the purpose of either informing or entertaining their audience. It can be said that the purpose of the recount is to retell what happened and to tell a series of ideas.

According to Anderson (2004), recount text is the text which gives information about what happened, where it happened and who was involved. It has three parts of structures: an orientation, series of event, and reorientation. In orientation step, there are details of who/what/when and where. A series of events retell what has happened. The reorientation concludes the retelling of events. Based on the definition above we can say that recount is a type of text which has purpose to retell events or activities in the past time in sequential order.

Derewianka (1990) also states that there are three types of recount text, namely:

1. Personal Recount
   At this personal recount, the writer can retell an event or activity that the writer has been personally involved in. This type of recount can be used in oral anecdote and in a diary. It uses first person pronouns (I, We), personal responses to the events can be included at the end and details are often chosen to add interest or humor.
2. Factual Recount
   In this recount, the writer records the particular of an incident. For instance: report of a science experiment, police report, news report, and historical account. Factual recount uses of third person pronouns (She, He, it, and they), detail are usually selected to help the reader reconstructs activity or incident accurately, it may use passive voice.
3. Imaginative recount
   In imaginative recount, the writer takes on an imaginary role and giving detail of events. It usually written in the first person and it may be appropriate to include personal reaction.

According to Gerot (1995: 194) three important parts in recount text, such as:

1. Social function: to retell events for the purpose of informing and entertaining.
2. Generic Structure, consists of:
   - Orientation: Provides the setting and also introduces the participants.
   - Events: tell what happened and in what sequence.
   - Reorientation: optional – closure of events.
3. Significant Lexicogrammatical Features
   - Focus on specific participants (Mr. Bean, Our Dog, Mrs. Nancy)
   - Use of material processes – Action verbs (e.g. went, wrote, and listened).
   - Circumstances of time and places (e.g. Wednesday, across the road).
   - Focus on temporal sequence, it means details that irrelevant to the purpose of the txt should be avoided.
   - Use of past tense.

From the explanation above, it can be said that a good recount in the context of the second language acquisition should be entertaining and informative. It should retell an incident or an event in a fairly objective or factual style so that the audience has a good understanding of what happened. And also a recount text consists of three important parts: they are Orientation, Events, and re-Orientation.

3. NATURE OF DIARY

Diary is a book that is written every day to express feeling, opinion, and thought. It contains good and bad experience of someone. A diary can be used for some interesting events and important dates. It is also something we can look back to the old memories. So, we can write all day activities in ti or we can write the plans for tomorrow. English teacher can use diary as a tool to improve the students' writing ability. This

statement is supported by Attar (1990), "A diary or writing in a diary can increase one's motivation in learning English".

In addition, Cristensen (in Hiemstra 2002) says that a diary can be used as learning tool for students. So, it can be used as supplement to a classroom activity. Hiemstra (2001) says that there are a number of potential benefits for learners in maintaining some types of diary. The first is personal growth and development. Diary can help with such learning goals or expected outcomes as integrating life experience with learning efforts, allowing for freedom expression, stimulating mental development. It is an investment to students through a growing of awareness of personal thoughts and feeling. The second one is institution and self expression. Interpreting new thoughts or even dreams can increase self confidence, not only in the classroom but in many other settings too.

In other opinion, diary is as introspective research tools to motivate students in learning (Suzuki, 2004). It means that diary is useful for the students to motivate them in learning. It defines merits of diaries as research tools. Nunan (in Mori 2006) argues merits of diary study are close to what Mc Donough (1997) argues where diary in English language teaching which is studied from three aspects. They are being rich both quantitatively and reflectively, being self evidently subjective and introspective and reflective.

Moreover Clark (2010) says write a diary may provide information for memoir, autobiography or biography. It is generally written not with the intention of being published as it stands, but for the author shown us in recent years. However, there is internal evidence some diaries that they are written with eventual publication in mind, with the intention of self vindication (pre-or posthumous) or simply for profit.

From the definitions above, it can be concluded that diary is a way to motivate students in learning. It gifts benefit for students to develop their vocabulary, as rehearsing for their ability in writing. The students can also remember what they have done every day as checking for their strengths and their weaknesses in writing.

4. ORGANIZING A BLOG

Before creating a blog, the teachers have to make sure all facilities have been ready to use such as computer, internet connection and LCD projector. Then, the teacher will show the steps to create a blog for students by using provider from blogger, namely:

a. Type http://blogger.com. Here, the students do to create a blog by visiting a blog the website of the blogger.com itself. They will see directly a display that has heading "blogger". Then, the students click the orange box that is written "create a blog".

b. Displaying name. Here, the students should type their name in the empty box named "display name" because the others will know the owner of the blog. After that, tick empty small boxes of "Email Notification" as its function is to send the students announcement, advice, and other information to help them get the most out of their blog. Then, tick a small box of "Acceptance of term" to ensure whether the students accept the term of service or not.

c. Naming the Blog. Here, the students give the title and the URL address to the blog. They may give a catching and attracting name, where the people will be interested to visit their blog. Then, the students will fill their blog URL address in the second empty box under the blog title in order to make people easy to find the students' blog

d. Choosing a template. Template is the design of a web page or blog and all its components (e.g. images, style sheets, etc) either static files or dynamic files in the form of a program or application that runs as a web application. Steps in choosing a good template are, 1) Click the templates, 2) Click "Pick New Template" to select the desired template, 3) Click the "Template Preview" to see the layout provided and 4) Click save to save the template. There are so many choices of interesting themes with different view. The students just need to click one of the templates depending on their interesting with. It is to make the students' blog more attractive.

e. Start blogging. When the students are ready to start blogging, it means that they are called as a blogger. It can be seen by the appearance of the notice "your blog has been created" at the top left position. Now, they can write anything they want on their blog by clicking orange arrow which labeled "start blogging".

5. PREPARING LESSON PLAN

The teacher should make a lesson plan before she/he comes to the class because it is guidance for the teacher to make the teaching learning runs systematically. In making lesson plan, there are five things that should be considered by the teacher. The first is objectives; it is specific statement that describes the particular skills that students expect to have or perform at the end of the lesson. The second is the time; the teacher must consider the time of the lesson in a meeting. The third is materials; in choosing the materials the teachers are expected not only use the materials from the text book and materials that have been provided in the curriculum but the teachers can also combine them with the authentic materials. The materials can be taken from the internet, magazines, newspapers, etc. The teacher should choose the authentic materials that are suitable with the topic to be taught. The fourth is the activity; it is what the teachers and the students do in the classroom. The teacher should be able to make the students active in the learning process. It can be done by doing classroom discussion and dividing the students into several groups. But it is up to the teacher to create the activities as long as the student enjoy and be active in the learning process. The last is evaluation; it is a way to measure the lesson whether it is understood or not by the students such as giving final writing, exercising WH questions, true or false exercise, filling gap text and etc.

6. TEACHING STRATEGY

a. Pre-writing Strategy

At this stage, the teacher has to do some preparations before presenting the lesson in the classroom. The teacher has to make the students being cleared of the content. The teacher will explain clearly what they are going to write and the purpose to write it. They have to know what they expect to achieve through their writing. To start the teaching and learning process, the teachers have to stimulate the students' background knowledge related to the topic or problem they are going to discuss by asking some questions such as have you ever had diary? Do you know what things usually are written in a diary? And can you remember your last experience?. After that, the teacher starts to give the students ideas about what are they going to write. The teacher will show them an example of a diary to help them to get more description of a diary.

January 22,

Dear Diary,

My family, my wife, my two sons, and I went to London on our vacation. Firstly, we saw our travel agent to book the tickets. And we also went to the British Embassy to get visas to enter Britain. We had booked fourteen days tour. This included travel, accommodation and also tours around London.

We boarded a long Boeing flight. This flight was nearly fourteen hours. On the plane, the cabin crews were very friendly. They gave us magazines and newspapers to read. We also got food and drink. There was a film for their entertainment. We had a very pleasant flight. We slept part of the way.

On arrival at Heathrow Airport, We had to go to Customs and Immigration. The officers were pleasant. They checked the document carefully but their manners were very polite. My family and I collected our bags and went to London Welcome Desk. We arranged the transfer to a hotel.

The hotel was a well-known four star hotel. The room had perfect view of the park. The room had its own bathroom and toilet. Instead of keys for the room, they inserted a key-card to open the door. On the third floor, there was a restaurant serving Asian and European food. They had variety of food.

The two weeks in London went very fast. At the end of the 14 days, we were quite tired but we felt very happy.

Richard

The teacher leads the students to read the example of the diary and leads a discussion among the students about what the information written in this kind of diary. The teacher reads the diary paragraph by paragraph. After that, the teacher asks the student to have their conclusion as brainstorming they did just moment such as series of events, a person experiences, thoughts and feeling, and events outside the writers' direct experience. The next, the teacher tells the students that they are going to write his/her own experience on their blog in form of recount text. To make the clear of content and illustration of what they are going to write, the teacher shows his/her diary in form of recount text from his own blog to the student and leads the students to read it. It starts from the first paragraph and after that discussing it with the students in order to get all information in it and help the student to write their own paragraph. The

next step is the teacher will tell the students what they have read in the paragraph called as Orientation in the generic structure of the recount text.

Then, the teacher comes to discuss the second paragraph with the students and ask some questions about it as the way to know the students' comprehension. The teacher tells the student what they have read called as events in the generic structure of the recount text. After that the teacher discusses about the third paragraph with student and gives some questions to see the students' comprehension. The teacher tells the students what they have read called as Re-orientation in the generic structure of the recount text. Finally, the teacher writes on the board the semantic mapping of this generic structure and explains more details the meaning of the text form and its language features.

b. *Whilst Writing Activity*

In this phase, the teacher has to motivate the student to participate actively and give them chance to develop their work independently and creatively based on their interest, talent, and their development psychologically and physically. First of all, guide the students to decide a topic to write or the teacher can give a topic to write for example "Yesterday". Then, ask them to write their experiences yesterday. Ask them to write on the piece of the paper first before inserting to the blog. The teacher can leads the students to construct to write their first paragraph by asking them some questions like what was happen, what time was it, where was it happen and who was involved in the event. The teacher asks the students to write the second paragraph which tells about the events. The teacher can help them to get ideas by asking them what happen first, what happen then, and what happen after that. If the events are very long, there can be more than one paragraph in the event. The next is about the last paragraph that is re-orientation. The teacher leads and helps the students to write the last paragraph by asking them how they felt on that time and will they recommend their friend or family to go there. Finally, after the students have a full draft of their text, the teacher asks the students to type the whole text of their diary on their blog. And then, the teacher asks the students to publish it in order to be able to be read by others. The teacher also needs to give instruction to the students to leave comments at least on 2 of their friends' blog to conduct peer correction among them. While the students leaving comments on their friends' blog, the teacher also leaves comments on each students' blog to correct them. So, they can edit their own writing.

c. *Post Teaching Activity*

In post activities, the teachers ask the students to read all comments on their blog, both their friends' and the teachers' comments. After they write the comments, ask them to edit their text based on their each blog. When they finish writing the revising text, ask them to re-publish their text on the blog. So, everybody can read their diary. Finally, after the students know how to write a recount text, ask them to write on their blog their experience weekly and tell them the teacher will check their writing and will give mark for their writing. Tell them that for each student can also give comments on their friends' blog and the teacher will give additional mark on it. In short, the teachers suggest the students to try this activity to improve their English ability.

7. GIVING FEEDBACK

There are alternative ways in giving feedback to the students' writing in solving the problem above. Based on the place where it is given, giving feedback is divided into two ways:

a. *Classroom feedback.*

Feedback in classroom is given after the students publish their first draft to their blog. It is really important because they will edit and do revising after it. It is also impossible to do feedback to all the students' task but the teacher can choose the general mistake which appears in the classroom. The teacher will show that general mistakes by LCD projector. The comments can come from the students or from the teacher. After the teacher finish in giving feedback to those blogs, ask other students also to revise and edit their writing.

b. Outside classroom feedback

In order to motivate the students to keep writing outside classroom, the teacher should keep giving feedback to the students' writing. First, the teacher makes some groups of the students and every group should come from variety level of students. Point the cleverest one as the chairperson because she/he will have a task for the group. After that, the teacher will explain what they will do in the group. Each group has to organize a new blog that is called a team blog. It is the chairperson task to organize the blog. When the students have published their writing on their blog, ask them to give comment to their friends' blog. The comments are only in their own group or in the same group. The purpose is to give them a chance to do peer correction. When it is finished, it is the chairperson role to summarize all the comments on his/her friends; blog and then post it to the team blog. Finally, the teacher will read the summary and give feedback on the team blog based on the mistake that have on each blog. Therefore, the teacher doesn't need to read every student' blog because it has been conducted by peer correction among them.

8. CONCLUSION

Writing is defined as an expression of language and idea that convey message to readers. In expression idea, students should have some tools to support it such as paper, pen, computer etc. Hence, diary is a book that is written everyday to express feeling, opinion, and though. It contains good and bad experiences of someone. A diary can be used for some interesting events and important dates. A diary is also used as the technique because it can be seen as a simple form of a recount text.

Simply put, a blog is a web page that is someone frequently updated that is often referred to as an online journal. Blog or online journal is believed to help the students to write whether they like, where they can edit and publish as often as they want, which also can be a sharing media for all audiences, both in classroom or outside the classroom or even abroad who cannot imagine before considering this is an online journal. In connection with the improvement of writing skills, the use of blogs is accordance with the characteristics in learning writing. Students can write anything in an existing blogs and other information on other available slots.

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