



THE USE OF CARD SORT TO IMPROVE VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' ABILITY IN WRITING CONDITIONAL SENTENCES

Merley Sas Mita¹, Rusdi Noor Rosa²

English Department

Faculty of Languages and Arts

State University of Padang

email: merley.mita@yahoo.com

Abstract

Based on the writer's experience, many students have difficulties in writing conditional sentences, such as no interest in writing; lack of grammar and vocabulary; inappropriate strategy or media when doing teaching and learning process. Considering such problems, an appropriate teaching technique is needed to help students improve their ability in writing conditional sentences. This paper is aimed at explaining how to use card sort technique in writing conditional sentences. Card sort technique is conducted by making several groups of students of four or five. After that, the teacher gives the card to each of students and explains how to use card sort to them. Then the students should match and sort the card based on its pair. Next, they should write the conditional sentences in the blank space provided based on the picture and type of the sentences given. Finally, the students present their discussion in front of the class. The objective of this paper is to help the students visualize their knowledge in the form of group work and to improve students' ability in writing conditional sentences.

Key words: Card Sort, Writing, Conditional Sentences

A. INTRODUCTION

All people in this world need to communicate with each other. When they communicate, they certainly use a language which can be either in a spoken or written form. By using language, people can convey what they need, they want, and they mean. Language plays a very important role in human life through which people communicate each other as they always need accompaniment in their life. There are several functions of language, such as by using language all of people could make statements, convey facts and knowledge, report something, and also keep social relations between the language users. These indicate that through

¹ English ELTSP of English Department of FBS Universitas Negeri Padang graduated on September 2018

² Lecturer of English Department of Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Padang



language, people can express their ideas, feelings, and information through communication.

English is one of the international languages used by many people in the world. Therefore, using English is the easiest way to communicate with people from other countries about many aspects of human life, such as technology, economy, society, and education. In Indonesia, English is considered as a foreign language; nevertheless, it is one of the compulsory subjects learned by students in high schools. According to Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, in order to build students' understanding in English, teachers should make an effective and attractive teaching and learning process in the classroom.

In learning English, there are four skills that must be mastered by students including listening, speaking, writing and reading. Writing is one of the skills needed in many situations and cannot be separated in many occupations. It is considered as the most difficult skill to study, as Nunan (1989: 36) argues that writing is an extremely difficult cognitive activity which requires the learner to have control over various factors. According to Akbar (2010: 2), it seems difficult for Indonesian students to write conditional sentences since the grammatical rule in terms of the verb form of English and Indonesia language is totally different.

Based on the writer's experience when teaching in SMK (vocational high school), some students said that they often felt confused about writing, they always did not know what to write and how to write correctly. The writer found several problems related to writing, such as no interest in writing; lack of grammar and vocabulary; inappropriate strategy or media when doing teaching and learning process. These kinds of problems are faced by the writer as the serious problem and must be solved in the teaching learning process. Furthermore, when students do the writing text individually, they will get many problems and it does not work optimally; as a result, the students' ability in writing would not increase. Individual work makes students less confident in doing their writing that makes some of the students tend to look at their friend's work and imitate it.

Conditional sentence is a sentence which consists of two clauses; a main clause which contains modal auxiliary and a subordinate clause which is introduced by if (Hadirotusholihah, 2013: 6). To understand conditional sentences for Indonesian students seems difficult since the grammatical rule in terms the verb form of English and Indonesian language is totally different.

Teaching and learning can be successful when the students can directly feel the advantages of learning materials by experiencing and learning it. There are many factors supporting in the teaching and learning process, for example the use of appropriate media, learning materials which support the teaching learning process, classroom management, and teacher's method and technique in conveying the subjects. There are several ways to make students more interested, excited, and motivated in the learning process and there are so many methods that can be used as the ways to study. Games, for example, can help teachers to make language become useful and meaningful (Wright, 1983). The other ways that can be used by teachers to teach the students are through appropriate media. There are a lot of media that can be used in teaching writing such as card (Thresia, 2017), pictures (Orianda and Rosa, 2013; Asirika and Refnaldi, 2018), puppet (Hayati,

2009), mixedink (Jannah and Rosa, 2013) and others. This writing will focus on using card as a media to teach students in writing conditional sentences. Card sort can establish conditions that enable the students to acquire knowledge and skill.

B. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Writing is one of the language skills in learning English. Writing involves all aspects of language such as: grammar, vocabulary, logical arrangements of ideas and word order spelling. Massi (2001: 1) says that writing is a tool for creation of the ideas from writer to reader via text and it is as a consolidation of linguistic systems which aim as communication in an interactive way. The statement above shows that writing implies the transmission of successful ideas from a writer to a reader through the text, and the exchange of this information becomes a powerful tool to motivate and encourage the development of language skills. In line with that, Hyland (2009: 30) says that writing is an interaction between the readers and writers in communicative dimension to write (as cited in Kartini, 2014).

In the communication context, writing plays as important role as speaking does. According to Rosa (2013: 8), the role of writing in communication cannot be underestimated because it is a tool that enables people (students) to communicate with others without limitation of time and distance. In a more detailed way, Harmer (2004: 31-33) states there are several advantages of learning writing: (1) writing is often not time-bound in the way of conversation, (2) writing can encourage students to focus on the use of accurate language used, (3) writing is often used as a means to reinforce the language that has been thought, (4) writing is often useful in preparation for some other activities, (5) writing can be used as an integral part of an activity. Based on the explanation above, writing is an important skill to be learned for its large number of advantages. Writing helps us to solve and improve other skills in learning language.

The teaching of writing is an important part of education. In teaching writing, teachers can focus on the product of writing or the process of writing itself (Harmer, 2007:257). Also, he states that there are three reasons for teachers to teach writing skill to their students. First, writing gives them more thinking time than they get when they attempt spontaneous conversation. Second, teaching writing is as reinforcement for students' understanding of language learning. Third, teaching writing can develop students' ability to become a writer. Through writing students can recall their knowledge. By teaching writing, teacher can give a chance to students to recall and memorize their grammatical structure, idioms, and vocabulary that students have gotten in previous grades.

Curriculum of 2013 is competency and character based curriculum. In addition, 2013 curriculum is a of integrated work between the reconstruction of passing grade competence, suitability, expansion, adequacy, evaluation reform and learning revolution. English Curriculum is part of the 2013 Curriculum whose scope of management begins with the formulation of Basic Competencies (KD), especially KD 3 and KD 4, to embody KI 3 and KI 4. Basic competencies are then formulated for the use of English in three types of texts namely (1) interpersonal, (2) transactional, and (3) functional. In the interpersonal text serves to maintain interpersonal relationships; in the transactional text serves to exchange

information, goods and services; in the functional text function to perform certain task or job. In this curriculum, there are five steps in learning English. There are; observing, questioning, exploring, association, and communicating.

Based on the 2013 curriculum, there are several kinds of text that should be taught for the eleventh grade students of vocational high school students. The texts are the compulsory materials that should be taught for vocational high school that include interpersonal, transactional, and functional texts. This paper itself deals with the kind of transactional text which is conditional sentences.

A conditional sentence is a two-clause sentence in which the first clause states a supposition and the second clause states the results if the condition is fulfilled (Elliot, 1981: 4). According to Murcia and Freeman (1999: 545) conditional sentence is a complex sentence that consists of a main clause and a subordinate clause. There are three types of conditional sentences. Each type consists of different combinations of tenses. In the first type, the sentence states that future conditions may refer to actions that may or may not occur in the future. In the second type, the sentence describes a situation that does not exist or is not real. In the third type, this conditional sentence shows the past and shows the unreal and unfulfilled situation.

Those types of conditional sentences need to be taught clearly to the students. One of the techniques that can be used in teaching conditional sentences is card sort. According to Spencer (2004), card sort is simple, great, reliable, and inexpensive technique for finding patterns in how learners would expect to find the context. Hidayati (2011: 8) defines card sort is a technique for exploring how people group items. It means that we can develop structure that maximize the probability of users being able to find items and also easy and cheap to conduct.

Based on the statements above, it can be said that card sort is a simple technique that make students become active in doing the learning process. Card sort is a technique used to invite students to find concepts and facts through the classification of the material discussed in the lesson. Furthermore, this technique uses the card as a medium in the practice of learning that will help students to understand the lessons and foster their motivation in the learning process.

Cards are one of media that can be used in the teaching of any subject. By using the card sort the students will more interest, motivate, and active in the study. If students are interested and motivated, they will actively participate and will study hard during the teaching and learning process. There are a lot of ways to do it:

- a. Preparing 10 random cards that contain of conditional sentences. They are five main cards and five if-clause cards.
- b. Asking the students to sort the cards based on its pair.
- c. Asking the students to write a sentence based on the type of conditional sentences as instructed in the card.
- d. After writing the sentence on the card, asking the students to sort the card based on the category
- e. Asking them to discuss it.
- f. Asking them to present it.

C. DISCUSSION

1. Teacher's preparation

In order to have a good preparation, the first step that teachers should do to determine the success of the teaching process is planning. Before entering the class and starting the lesson, it is essential for teachers to make some preparations. The teachers should have made some preparations in order to support and to make it as a reference in implementing the learning and teaching process.

Having a good preparation will help the teachers in teaching and learning process and also increase their confidence because they have already known things to do in the classroom. This preparation is formulated in a lesson plan. In the lesson plan, there is a written procedure that is going to be used by the teacher as a reference in teaching. The lesson plan will produce many benefits for the teacher, such as it will help them to teach systematically. It consists of core competence, basic competence, indicators, objectives, learning materials, learning models, teaching and learning activity, media, and evaluation, as explained below.

2. Implementing Card Sort in Writing Conditional Sentences at Vocational High School

In applying card sort technique in writing conditional sentences at vocational high school students, the teacher divides the teaching process in three stages, they are pre teaching activities, whilst teaching activities and post teaching activities.

1. Pre- teaching activity

Pre-teaching activity is the first stage in teaching and learning process. This stage is a sharp point because the teacher can see the students' readiness. At the beginning of this stage, teachers greet students to gain their attention. Then, teachers ask a student to lead a pray before starting the lesson. After that, teachers check the students' attendance and their readiness for learning. Before starting the lesson on a new topic, teachers can review the last lesson and motivate their students. It is useful to know the students' understanding of the previous lesson. In this stage, teachers also identify the students' background knowledge related to the lesson given. It can be done by asking several questions are related to the lesson.

2. Whilst-teaching activities

In whilst-teaching activity, teachers explain the lesson and also apply the card sort technique. Moreover, the students are guided to participate in discussing the topic. In teaching writing conditional sentences by using card sort technique, there are several steps in whilst teaching: observing, questioning, experimenting, associating and communicating.

In observing activity, the teacher provides opportunities for students to make observation in order to build students' knowledge about conditional sentence. The teacher facilitates students to make observations; they can observe interesting things on the pictures provided. At this time, the teacher displays some pictures related to conditional sentences. After that, the teacher gives the students an example of conditional sentences orally. Then, they have to pay attention to the teacher.

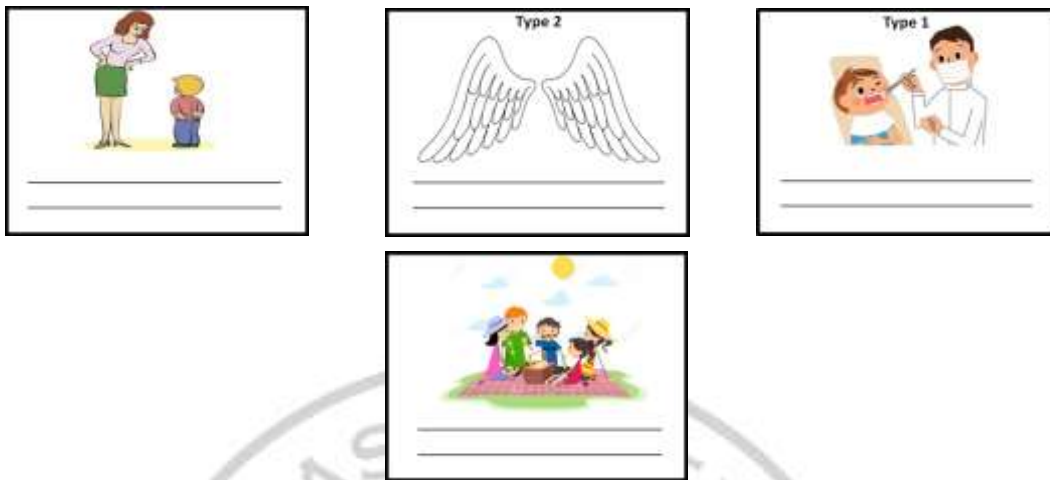
In questioning activity, the students ask questions about information that is not understood from what is observed. The teacher encourages students to question about: What is a conditional sentence? What is the social function, generic structure and language features of a conditional sentence? And what is the difference between each type of conditional sentence? Some students may ask these questions during the teaching learning process. Then, the teacher leads the students to do a discussion related to the questions given.

In exploring activity, the teacher builds students' knowledge about conditional sentences by explaining the definition, social function, generic structure and language feature of conditional sentences. Afterwards, the teacher makes an example of conditional sentences by using the picture. She/he writes the example of conditional sentences in whiteboard. The students may explore more information about conditional sentences from the textbook, internet and the material given by the teacher. After that, they should take a note the important information they get in their book. In this activity, the teacher also introduces the card sort technique to the students which will be used in the learning activity.

In associating activity the card sort technique will be conducted. First, the teacher divides the students into several groups. Each group consists of 4 to 5 students. The teacher shows the card, and then reminds the students about conditional sentence. The students may give comment. Next, the teacher gives the cards to each group of students consisting of 10 random cards (main clause card and if-clause card) containing different types of conditional sentences. Each card consists of pictures and the blank space that students must write; they should write a conditional sentence based on the condition of the picture on each card. They need to write whether it is main clause or if clause.

After the teacher distributes the cards to each of the group, all of the students should pay attention to the instruction given by the teacher. The teacher explains the rules to students. The first thing that students should do is to match and sort the card based on the pair of each card. There are 5 pairs of cards, for each pair consists of a main clause card and if-clause card. Each of the pairs has different types of conditional sentences. Then, students should write the conditional sentence in the black space provided based on the picture and type of the sentence given as can be seen in the following cards:





After writing the sentence and sorting the card based on the type of conditional sentences, each group should discuss it. They can discuss about the definition, social function, and generic structure of conditional sentences. Here, the teacher must control and guide the students. Card sort technique will increase the students' interaction and socialization; also it is very helpful for students to engage in meaningful communication directed towards a goal or set of goals.

In communicating activity, students have finished discussing about conditional sentence for each type based on the sources and the activities that they have done. After that, each group can present their discussion in front of the class. Then, the other group can give suggestions or critics about the presentation. They can share their thoughts about conditional sentence and the activities that have been conducted. Here, it is time for the teacher to do assessment toward the result of every group's writing.

3. Post teaching-activities

At the end of the lesson, students and teacher conclude the lesson that has been learned together. They can conclude about the definition, social function, generic structure of conditional sentence and the activities that have been conducted. Also, teacher re-explains the material that has been taught. If some students have something that they do not understand about the conditional sentence, they can ask the teacher to make it clear. In this case, the teacher will know how far the students understand about the lesson by using card sort technique. The teacher also asks about students' feeling in writing conditional sentences by using card sort technique. The lesson is finished and closed by praying together.

There are several advantages of teaching writing conditional sentences by using card sort technique for vocational high school students. First, the card sort technique creates the enjoyment in writing process. The card sort technique will not make students bored when learning conditional sentences because it provides motivation for students to write, also it is fun and challenging. By having more motivation, the students will have more interest in writing and will give more attention to the teacher's explanation. As Cameron (2001:1) finds that it is easy

for students to lose their attention to the lesson as it is hard for children to maintain their motivation in a difficult subject. The playing cards are used to engage the student's attention (Brown, 2004). Hopefully, the student will become more interested in learning writing because of the enjoyment while teaching writing.

Second, learning with card sort technique is the collaborative activity. Collaborative activity involves students working together in order to complete the task. According to Panitz (1996) collaborative activity is a personal philosophy, not just a classroom technique. When students discuss in groups, they will share their ideas to achieve the objectives of the lesson. There is a sharing of authority and acceptance of responsibility among the groups' members. In line with Rosdiana (2015), the most obvious advantage of the collaborative writing process is well summarized in the old adage, "the two heads are better rather than one". Having one more person working in a group increases the amount of combined knowledge of the writers.

Last, the use of card as a medium is important and useful; the teacher should provide some interesting materials to motivate the students in the learning process. In line with that, Harmer (2004) argues that the use of media will help teachers to choose good writing assignments because students need them or because they tend to be motivated by them because of their involvement. The use and choice of appropriate media are important things in the reconditioning process of education, because the use of the media can make the students more interested in the teaching and learning process. Card as a medium in teaching writing conditional sentence that makes students become motivated in learning the conditional sentence.

In conclusion, by using this card sort technique in learning conditional sentence, students will understand the difference between each of conditional sentence type by sorting it based on the category. The uses of media as a tool are able to improve students understanding in the learning teaching process. In addition to feeling the atmosphere of learning language with a fun way, it is important to use appropriate media to motivate the students.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conditional sentence can be taught by applying a card sort technique. It means that the teacher can use card sort technique in teaching writing conditional sentences. By applying this technique, the students can become interested, motivated and understand conditional sentences well.

Teaching writing skill in the classroom by using the card sort technique is divided by three stages. They are pre-teaching, whilst-teaching, and post-teaching. In pre-teaching a teacher prepares students to get involved actively in the learning process and see the readiness of students to receive the material to be given. In whilst teaching, the teacher gives pictures and discusses it with students to get ideas or information. Teacher leads the students to the main activity in the teaching learning process. Here, the teacher explains about the definition, social function, generic structure and language features of conditional sentences. After

that, the teacher divides the students into several groups and give the cards to each group of students consisting of 10 random cards (5 main clause cards and 5 if-clause card) containing type of conditional sentences. Each card consists of pictures and the blank space that students must write, they should match and sort the card based on its pair. Then, they should write conditional sentences based on the condition of the picture on each card. They need to write whether it is main clause or if clause. After writing the sentence and sort the card based on the type of conditional sentences, each group should discuss it. Finally, in post-teaching, the teacher asks students to conclude the lesson and solves their difficulties.

From the conclusion above, it is suggested for teachers to use an appropriate material and technique that can make the students interested in learning and improve their ability in writing conditional sentences and students are able to differentiate each type of conditional sentences. Furthermore, the use of this technique should encourage and motivate students in writing conditional sentence. Using card sort technique in teaching writing can help students to organize their ideas and write their ideas in a good order. Before implementing this strategy, teachers should do some preparation. They need to choose and prepare the appropriate teaching material and media, understand the topics to be discussed in the classroom, make a lesson plan, and consider the time allocation for conducting the teaching-learning process.

In order to know the effectiveness of using card sort technique in writing conditional sentence, it is expected that there is further research on how card sort technique can be used to improve vocational high school students' ability in writing conditional sentences.

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