

USING FREEWRITING TECHNIQUE IN TEACHING WRITING A RECOUNT TEXT TO JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Yaholil Mustapa¹, Rusdi Noor Rosa²
English Department
Faculty of Languages and Arts
State University of Padang
E-mail: y.mustapa@yahoo.com

Abstrak

Makalah ini menguraikan penggunaan teknik *Freewriting* sebagai sebuah teknik dalam mengajar menulis teks "Recount" untuk membantu siswa mengatasi masalah di dalam menulis. Dalam pemakaian teknik ini dalam kelas, ada beberapa tahap yang perlu dilakukan yaitu *pre-teaching*, *whilst-teaching*, dan *post-teaching*. Dengan menggunakan teknik ini diharapkan siswa mampu menulis teks *Recount* dengan benar.

Key words: writing, freewriting, recount text

A. Introduction

Writing is usually considered as a part of four integrated skills in mastering English beside listening, speaking and reading. Homstad and Thorson (1996) say that writing is a complex process in which the writer faces many aspects such as content, format, sentence, structure, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, coherence, and unity. It is also a kind of processes where the writer considers the choice of words and ideas to be expressed that are logically and clearly connected. When sentences have been arranged closely related each other, it is expected that the ideas of writing can be understood by the readers.

Moreover, according to Chakraverty and Gautum (2000), writing is an important part of language learning that is essentially a reflective activity that requires enough time to think about the specific topic and to analyze and classify any background knowledge. In addition, it needs suitable language to structure these ideas in the form of a coherent discourse. It means that writing is an important skill. This skill asks enough time to concern about topic, analyze, and classify background knowledge to make it become a text logically.

In writing, there are several stages that should be followed. According to Peregoy and Boyle (1993), there are three stages on the writing process. They are a) prewriting or motivation, discussion and concept development. In this stage,

¹ Student of English Language Teaching Program of FBS UNP graduated on March 2013

² Advisor, Lecturer in Faculty of Languages and Arts, State University of Padang

students might use graphic organizer as an aid to clarify the concept they will use in writing; b) whilst writing, which takes place in classroom or at home so students can rely on both teachers and other students for feedback and support. During writing process, opportunities should be provided for students to edit and revise their work; finally c) post writing, in which students share their writing with others, read aloud what they have written, or exchange writing with other students.

However, writing has become a common problem for most students. Mathers (2005) says that students everywhere seem to find writing a daunting task. They usually complain that as soon as they pick up their pencils, their minds go blank and panic because the students believe that their teacher will mark them down for every “i” they do not dot, every “t” they do not cross, and every error they might make in spelling, structure, or vocabulary. Furthermore, Mathers (2005) adds that many students feel defeated before they even begin writing and are paralyzed by their feelings of inadequacy and insecurity.

As mentioned by Peregoy and Boyle (1993), prewriting is the first stage in writing. In addition, Shu-min (1993) points out that the purpose of prewriting activity is to help students generate ideas, for the early stage of the writing process all ideas are welcomed. Furthermore, Blanchard and Root (2004) mention that prewriting is the thinking, talking, reading, and writing students do about their topic before they write. Also, Flachmann (2011) mentions that prewriting refers to activities that help students explore a general subject, generate ideas about it, select a specific topic, establish a purpose, learn as much as possible about students’ readers, and draft a thesis statement.

Based on the writer’s observation in Khaira Ummah Islamic Junior High School in Padang, in prewriting stage, the teacher always begins the process of writing with some questions that lead students to the topic. Teacher usually prepares three or four questions that stimulate students’ ideas to the topic that they are going to write, in this case recount text. After asking some questions the teacher usually moves to whilst writing by asking the students directly to write their recount paragraph. The troubles occur because not all students have a good ability without any preparation. The result is the students are not motivated and provoked enough to begin their writing process. So, the activity in prewriting does not successfully create students enthusiasm to move in whilst writing.

To solve these problems, there should be a writing technique used in pre-writing activity. The technique should be interesting for students, build their confidence, and make them comfortable with writing. One of the techniques is freewriting. Langan (1996) says that freewriting is one of techniques that are used in prewriting, as an important part of the writing process. Furthermore, Walsh (2006) says that freewriting is a good way to gather thoughts to begin the writing. In addition, Li (2007) states that the theoretical of freewriting is based on Elbow’s developmental model of writing, which views writing as a process of learning and growing during which thinking is stimulated, enhanced and expressed. It means

that the point of freewriting is a matter how writing is processed in the students' mind to produce ideas.

According to School Based-Curriculum (KTSP 2006), the students have to be able to write in five kinds of texts in junior high school; descriptive, narrative, report, recount, and procedure. All texts have different social functions, generic structures, and lexicogrammatical features. For junior high school students, one of the texts that they learn is recount which belongs to story genres in which its function is to enable people to retell a series of events or experiences in the past for the purpose of informing or entertaining.

According to Derewianka (1990), recount is unfolding at sequence of events over time. When composing a recount text, someone must consider using good language to keep the past alive so that readers find it easy to interpret the writer's experiences in the text. In addition, Gerot and Wignell (1994) say that there are some language features of recount text. First, it focuses on specific participant. Recount text usually tells about someone's experience. So, the focus of story is about anything happen to someone. Second, using materials process (action). Actually recount text involves the happens. So in recount text, it must be verbs used to tell the story. Third, circumstance of time and place. Fourth, it uses past tense. To tell a recount text, it uses past tense because the text talks about someone's experiences in the past. Fifth, focus on temporal sequence. It tells the events in someone's experience. Of course it will use time sequence.

Furthermore, Palmer (2003) adds that the purpose of recount text is to retell events in time order. He also mentions that the generic structures of recount text are orientation: setting the scene – who, what, where, when?-, sequential organization – what happened, in time order, closing statement – bring the writing to a satisfactory conclusion, and basic skeleton framework – a timeline ('this happened, then this happened, etc.'). In addition, Seaton (2006) divides that the generic structure of recount text into three parts; orientation or setting (information about person, time, place and incidents involved in the events), describing and identifying of events in chronological order, concluding comment that show a personal thought toward the events described.

B. Discussion

a. Preparation

Before applying teaching writing a recount text by using freewriting technique to junior high school students, a teacher should have several preparations. The first thing is materials. Furthermore, the teacher has to prepare the lesson plans. Through lesson plans, it is expected that the teachers can have guidelines and the main standard of teaching goals. In addition, the teacher also needs to consider the technique that can be used in teaching and learning process for writing. Technique is needed to develop students' writing skill and the technique that is chosen by the teacher depends on the material.

b. Teaching Writing Procedures by Using Freewriting

To anticipate the failure of using freewriting technique in teaching writing recount text to students, teachers have to know what the procedures in applying freewriting technique in the classroom. The followings are certain steps and procedures of using freewriting technique in the classroom.

1. Pre-teaching Activities

In pre-teaching activities, the teacher greets the students and checks the students' attendance. Then the teacher checks the students' readiness to study and also review the previous lesson to remind the students about the last lesson. In this stage, the teacher builds the students' background knowledge related to the lesson that will be given. Besides that, the teacher tells the students that they are going to write about recount text and the teacher tells the achievement indicators and the objectives of the lesson which are going to be taught.

2. Whilst-teaching Activities

The teacher begins this stage by introducing the processes of writing recount text by using freewriting technique. There are some steps in teaching writing a recount text by using freewriting technique. They are choosing a topic, writing all ideas about a topic (freewriting), editing freewriting, writing rough draft, editing the rough draft: checking and revising the work, and writing the final copy.

In the first step of writing, the teacher chooses and writes a topic “**The First Day at My Junior High School**” on the whiteboard. Later, he or she together with students will explore the idea about the topic. They do freewriting by writing whatever comes to their mind even if they have no ideas. Next, they edit their freewriting. They circle the point and they cross out the parts of his or her freewriting that do not support their point. After that, they write a rough draft. They write paragraph in rough form begin with their point without worrying too much about errors. Then, they move to the next step. The next step is editing the rough draft. In this step, the teacher and the students correct the grammar, punctuation, spelling, good form, organization, and so on. So, the recount text of the topic is written well based on the text organization (orientation, events, and reorientation) and then, it is analyzed based on the characteristics of recount text. Finally, they write a neat final copy of recount text. Teacher explains the generic structures, language features and the purpose from the recount text.

An example of final copy of recount text:

My First Day at Junior High School

When I was at first day in junior high school, I hated the day so much. In the morning, I came late. I went to my school with my old bicycle. After arriving at school, I saw a

Orientation

man standing in the school gate. He looked at me with his big eyes. He was angry at me and shouted at me “Hey! You’re late!” I was afraid. I could not speak anything at the time. He gave me a punishment. I had to push up fifty times. I was so tired. After that, he permitted me entering the gate.

Then, I walked in hurry to go to school yard. I saw many students gathered there. They were ready to hold ceremony. But, suddenly, I heard a teacher said to students that anyone, who was not wearing elementary school uniform, come to him. I became scared. At that time, I wore the blue uniform. There were no new students used blue uniforms except me. I was shy and I went to the front and I got punishment to stand in one foot until the end of ceremony. I wanted to cry because I was very tired.

Event

After ceremony finished, my friend and I went to class. I was confused because no one I knew there. In my class, there were 5 seniors. In class, we played a game. The game made us close to each other. I could remember the name of my members’ group. Because I did many mistakes, I could not enjoy the game anymore. I got punishment to sing a song and dancing. I hated it very much.

Event

After playing the game, we were invited to go around the school to see the facilities, oh I was very tired. After going around, it was time to break. I went to canteen with my friends. I bought fried rice, sprite, and bread. I ate greedily. I was very hungry and thirsty. The time for breaking was ended. We went to class again until the time to go home. It was so embarrassing for me and I did not like my first day in Senior High school.

Event

Teacher asks the students to write a new version of the story in groups. They are asked to sit in groups consist of 4 students and the groups are asked to prepare a piece of paper and a pen or pencil. Next, the teacher gives some new topics. Then, he or she asks the students to choose a topic and write it on the top of their piece of paper. After that, the teacher asks the students to do freewriting in their group about the topic in ten minutes. They write all ideas that come from the members of the groups.

After doing freewriting, the groups share and discuss about what point they want to make with their freewriting. Then, they circle the point and they cross out ideas that are not related to the chosen topic. Later, the groups write their paragraph in rough form without worrying too much about errors.

After that, they move to the next step, editing step. In this step, the groups edit the paragraph based on two-steps process. First, the groups check the paragraph as a whole. Second, the groups check the paragraph for good form, organization, grammar, punctuation, spelling, and so on. The last step is the groups write a neat final copy of their paragraph.

3. Post-teaching Activities

After finishing their recount text, the students are asked to be a volunteer to write and read their compositions of recount text in front of the classroom. Then the teacher and their friends will check and fix any mistakes in their story. Finally, in this stage, the teacher also leads the students to create a recount text individually. They can choose the topic freely in writing a recount text. If the time is not enough, the students can finish their work at home. Later, teacher gives comments about the students' text should be done on all papers that students hand in because they are important contribution to the student's development and sense of self-worth. In addition, the teacher may also ask the students to submit their prewriting and their other drafts.

C. Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that the students are able to write a recount text better by using freewriting technique. In this technique, the teacher has to have a good preparation in lesson plan, technique, and material. Besides that, the teacher follows the three stages of teaching writing in the classroom: pre-teaching activities, whilst-teaching activities, and post-teaching activities.

In pre-teaching activities, the teacher builds the students' background knowledge and relates it to the new topic for the students by using some questions. In whilst-teaching activities, there are four steps that are used. They are choosing a topic, freewriting, editing, and writing final copy. In post-teaching activities, teacher leads the students to create a recount text individually. Teacher gives some topics to students and students choose one of them.

Note: This article is written based on writer's paper and his advisor is Rusdi Noor Rosa, S.S., M.Hum.

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