

TEACHING WRITING A NEWS ITEM TEXT THROUGH APPLYING A NEWSCAST ACTIVITY TO SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstrak

Makalah ini membahas penggunaan *newscast activity* dalam pengajaran menulis teks *news item* dalam bahasa Inggris pada satuan pendidikan Sekolah Menengah Atas (SMA). Pada *newscast activity*, siswa bekerja dalam kelompok. Sebelum menulis teks berita, siswa terlebih dahulu mendengarkan rekaman berita dan membaca artikel berita yang diperlukan siswa untuk menulis teks berita mereka sendiri. Kegiatan ini berlanjut hingga mereka menulis teks dan membaca teks berita tersebut di depan kelas. Makalah ini diharapkan memberikan hal yang bermanfaat bagi para guru dalam mengajarkan siswa untuk menulis. Selanjutnya, *newscast activity* ini diharapkan mampu menjadi salah satu variasi pembelajaran menulis di kelas. Keunggulan kegiatan ini adalah mengintegrasikan beberapa keterampilan bahasa; mendengar, berbicara, membaca, dan menulis. Kegiatan ini juga membantu siswa meningkatkan pengetahuan tentang variasi bahasa lisan dan tulisan.

Key words: keterampilan menulis, *a newscast activity*, teks *news item*.

A. Introduction

In Indonesia, English has been taught in every stages of education for some years. It also becomes one of the essential subjects in every school. One of the purposes students learn English is the students are supposed to have an awareness of the importance of English to enhance their competitiveness in a global society. The students are required to master the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. So, they should be able to use English to communicate both in oral and written forms.

Generally, someone should master four skills in order to master a language. In English, there are integrated skills to be mastered such as: speaking, listening, reading and writing. As Haycraft states (1978:8) that there are various skills in mastering language: respective skill - listening and reading, and productive skills - speaking and writing. Related to the written language, writing is a means of communicating ideas and information which are related to the thinking process

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and expression of ideas in written form. It is important for the students to express their ideas and opinions, and develop their writing skill as well as other skills.

Writing is an important skill that must be mastered by the students in learning English. According to Byrne (1983:23), writing is more than the production of the graphic symbols. Writing requires a conscious effort in which one can put his ideas or thought into written form. He also adds writing is how one can produce well-arranged sentences in particular order and involves encoding message in which is understood by both writer and readers.

Ur (1997:163) says writing as an expressive process, the conveying message to readers. The learners can express their opinions, ideas, thought, or feeling in written form. The ideas themselves should be seen as the important aspect of the writing. Besides, writing is a way to impress the reader by selecting the best form of their writing.

According to Nunan (1998), there are two kinds of writing activities. The first one is writing as process in which students focus more on the various classroom activities, which are believed to promote the development of the language. Next is writing as a product. Students are engaged in imitating, copying, and transforming model of correct language.

Furthermore, Hedge (2002:32) views that writing as thinking process and as a process of discovery. Writing is the result of some strategies to manage the composing process, which is one way to develop a text. She also says writing involves a number of activities: setting goal, generating idea, organizing information, selecting appropriate language, making a draft, reading and reviewing, and revising and editing.

Writing is not a one-step activity. Harmer (2007:112) explains that writing is a complex activity which has some processes to be followed. The first processes are planning. In planning process, the writers have to think about three main issues: purpose of writing, audience, and content structure. Next process is drafting that is the first version of writing. Third process is reviewing. In this process, the writer can read and make some revising of the draft. Then, the last process is editing what the writer has written before producing a final version. He adds the result of final form of writing is influenced by the content that is discussed.

Unlike speaking, writing is not an ability which can be acquired naturally, even in one's first language. This ability has to be taught. However, writing is considered as difficult skill to teach. Kaye (2007) views writing is typically known as a solo activity which is done silently, involving physical effort and taking a lot of time. Linguistic, psychological, and cognitive problems also cause teaching and learning writing as a considerable challenge. This may not make it attractive to learners or teachers as a classroom activity. Therefore, the teachers are expected to find a better way to teach it effectively. The teachers should make the students feel at ease in order to start to write.

Even though it is difficult, teaching writing cannot be neglected. The teachers should put more concern in teaching writing. There is a very important reason putting writing as a part of syllabus. Writing can help the students learn. Writing can reinforce the grammatical structures, idioms, and vocabulary that have been taught by the students. Besides, when the students write, they have a

chance to explore the language and become very engaged with the new language (Raimes, 1983).

In addition, Harmer (2004:4) also noted that since students have more time to think as they write, writing may encourage students to focus on accurate language use and provoke language development. According to Morley (2011), teaching writing is not just about grammar, spelling, or the mechanics alphabet. Learners also need to be aware of and use the conventions of the genre in the new language.

In Indonesia, writing has been included into curriculum for years. In the 2013 Curriculum 2013, the most recent curriculum applied in Indonesia), there are four skills that have to teach to senior high school students; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Teaching writing, particularly, is targeted to make the students to be able to understand and produce written text based on its social function, generic structure, and linguistic features.

In teaching writing for senior high school students, the writing skill is taught through genres. One of the genres which are learned by the students is news item text. Gerot and Wignell (1994:200) explain news item text is a text which is grouped into the text genre of narration. It is a text which contains about news is categorized as news item text. This text supplies the readers the up to date about events or information which are considered newsworthy or important issue of the day. Therefore, it needs fact that should fulfill the certain criteria based on the types of news. Moreover, they also says that the social function of news item text is to inform readers, listeners or viewers the up to date about events or information which are considered newsworthy or important.

A news item text is ordered systematically. The generic structure of news item text is different from other type of texts. News item text has its own structure. News item text consists of newsworthy event, background events, and sources (Eltis: 1990). (1) *Newsworthy events*. Newsworthy events are put at the beginning because the reader needs to get the angle on the events before deciding whether to read on. It tells the main event which is considered newsworthy in a summary form. (2) *Background events*. It elaborates what happened or tells the detail information or what causes the incident. It can include the background, participant, time, and place related to the news. Besides, background events are the news story gives information about the events that lead up to. After the lead up events', the news writer will often give more information about what happened during and after the crisis what is likely to happen in the future. The stage fills out the context of the events for the reader. (3) *Sources*. It contains original comments which can be formed by the participants, witnesses, the official authorities or experts in the events. The news story is supposed to be about real events. If the writer is to appear reliable or the writer wants to highlight its importance, he needs to point to a reliable and relevant source of information. The sources point up the significance of the events that lead to and followed the crisis makes the events newsworthy.

In the learning process, many students encountered problems in writing a news item text. *First*, the students are lack of knowledge of news item text, particularly about the distinctive language news. *Second*, the students are lack of

ideas, information, and ability of grammar and vocabulary. This fails them in conveying their ideas into written form to produce the text. Third, the teachers apply conventional teaching method, uninterested media, and tedious activity in the classroom. Those factors lead to their failure in writing.

In order to help the students to write a news item text, the teacher can apply several joyful activities in the classroom. One of the activities is a newscast activity. Hedge (2005: 42) views a newscast activity is an activity in which the students are supposed to write a news story or text based on the information they obtain from the news records and headline news, 'news in brief' section of a paper, or short newspaper articles as sources. This writing activity is preceded by listening activity. The aim of this activity is to give an opportunity for writing in order to perform for an audience of fellow students.

The newscast activity offers students the chance to experiment with a wide variety of roles and tasks. This is a short, fun and easy activity that can also be combined with a sort of contest (Layton, 2005). Similar to this idea, Eliot (2007) explains school newscasts are a way to get students involved with the community. School newscast ideas can incorporate multiple aspects of students' education. In addition to teaching news, journalism, and multimedia editing, school newscasts can incorporate fictional reporting that ties into English and history lesson plans. A school newscast can also incorporate community involvement to help students branch out from the classroom.

In addition, the use of multimedia will enhance the classroom learning by challenging the students to use listening skill (Post, 2009). Besides, using audio in the classroom enables teachers to turn teacher-centered lesson into student-centered lesson. It provides teachers with more opportunities to be facilitator.

Moreover, Davies (2012) views multimedia such as video, audio, animation, graphic, or text can be a good teaching material. The learning activities where audio is used also work well in the classroom environment, in which the students build their listening skill.

There are several purposes of newscast activity. *First*, it allows the integration of all the language skills. The newscast activity is an integrated activity. The students cannot only increase their writing skill by writing the news text but also improve their listening, speaking, and reading skill. *Second*, the activity creates the atmosphere of class livelier as students actively involved in the teaching and learning process. As students' active participation improves, it will also motivate students to write more. Consequently, the objective of the teaching and learning process are achieved. *Third*, the activity introduces the students to variety of language. The news records and news articles provide oral and written language to the students. It will enlarge students' knowledge about variety of language. *Fourth*, working in groups develops the students' communication and social interaction skills. Instead of working on their own, working in groups gives opportunity to the students to build a positive relationship among them.

B. Discussion

The implementation of using a newscast activity to teach senior high school students in writing a news item text as follow:

1. Teacher's Preparation

A good teacher is a well-prepared teacher. A good preparation is needed in order to have the teaching and learning process run well. The teacher should have some preparations before bringing the lesson to the class. In teaching a writing news item text by applying a newscast activity, the preparations are related to the teaching material, media, and exercises which are accommodated in a lesson plan. The lesson plan will guide the teacher in delivering the lesson to the class in order to have the teaching and learning runs well.

2. Teaching Procedure

a. Pre- teaching Activity

Pre-teaching is the first stage in teaching and learning process. It only takes several minutes. The point of this activity is to prepare the students to join the learning process. In this stage, firstly, the teacher greets the students. Then, the teacher explains to them the basic competencies and the purposes of the lesson or objectives that must be reached in teaching learning process as stated in the lesson plan.

b. Post-teaching Activity

Whilst-teaching is the main stage of all teaching activity. The teachers are supposed to motivate them to participate actively. In this activity, the teacher leads the students to the main activities in the teaching writing a news item text through applying a newscast activity. According to the 2013 Curriculum, whilst-teaching stage is divided into observing, questioning, associating, experimenting, and networking/communicating.

In observing phase, the topic that is going to be learned is introduced. Firstly, the teacher shows news item text on the whiteboard or LCD screen. The students read the text thoroughly. The students also observe the important points of the text. They observe the social function of the text. After observing, the social function of the text, they study the generic structure. Then, they examine the language features of the text.

Then, in questioning phase, the teacher leads the students to ask questions about important points of news item text, such as the social function, generic structure, and linguistic features. Then, the teacher and the students discuss them together. The teacher can asks some general questions about the text. The teacher can write the students' answer in the white board, and then select the best answer as the social function of the text. Next, to find out the generic structure and linguistic features of the text, the teacher asks the students to examine the text once more. The teacher may help them to find the generic structure and linguistic features of the text and explain them.

The next phase is associating. Associating phase is a phase in which the students do the exercises. Before asking the students to write a news text, the teacher provides them some news records and news articles to gather information. The teacher plays the records one by one and asks the students to listen to the news records carefully. The teacher can play the records twice. Before listening to the records, the teacher checks the students' preparation, such as a piece of paper and pen to take note. In order to help the students to get the information from the records, the teacher helps the students with some guided questions about the

records. Those questions can be; what sort of incident or event was it? Where did it take place? When did it happen? Who were involved? Why did it happen? How was it happen? How did the people feel?

After that, the teacher shows one of the prompts which has been mentioned above on the LCD screen or the white board. The students also write any information related to the event they have listened from the records. Those prompts are only shown for several minutes in order to avoid the students check them while writing their own texts. The prompts, newspaper headlines, or “news in brief” section of a paper, or short newspaper article, will give more ideas of news content. In order to help the students decide the information that they are going to put into their text, the teacher can review the important points of news item text.

In experimenting phase the students write their own texts. The teacher divides the students in groups and gives them a chance to make their own text based on the information they have obtained. Each group can discuss the content and organization of their text. Here, the teacher plays the role as facilitator. The teacher can monitor and give language help in their process of composing their text.

Here, the teacher plays the role as facilitator. The teacher can monitor and give language help in their process of composing their text. The process of writing itself can be divided into several stages. (1) *Planning*, the students think about what they are going to write, the purpose of writing, and content structure. The teacher asks students to check the data in their notes. The students also select which events or topics they are going to write. Then, they can start by making an outline. (2) *Drafting*, once the students have planned out their ideas, the next step is to start drafting. The teacher directs the students to compose their news draft. The teacher can suggest them to keep referring back to their notes and the plan that they determined in the first stage. Besides, when writing the first draft of their text, the teacher may tell them to focus on content only and ignore about language and mechanical aspects such as grammar, spelling, and punctuation. The students may write several drafts before producing a final version. (3) *Reviewing*, then teacher asks the students re-read and make some revising of their draft. The students may discuss their work with fellow students. They may need to change the order of the information, expand certain sections, or cut details in others. The teacher can also respond by giving comment on the content and the organization of ideas. (4) *Editing*, the students can edit what they have written to produce their final text. During the editing stage, they need to check the grammar, sentence structure, word choice, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

The last phase is networking or communicating. It is a mean to present the students work. Therefore, after the students have their final texts, the teacher gives opportunity to the students to show their works. The representative of each group will read their news text in the front of the class. If possible, the teacher can make audio or video recording of their performances. Besides, the teacher can give reward for the best performance to appreciate the students’ work.

c. Post-teaching Activity

In this last stage, the teacher checks the students' understanding and asks the difficulty of the lesson. Next, the teacher concludes the lesson together with the students. Then, the teacher closes the class.

C. Conclusion and Suggestions

Based on previous discussion, it can be concluded that in order to help the students to write a news item text, the teacher can apply a newscast activity in the classroom. In this activity, the students are supposed to write a news text, and then perform their text in front of the fellow classmates. The newscast activity helps the students to organize the ideas in producing a news item text. Besides, this activity can provide the students with another experience of writing.

Then, in order to have this activity runs well, some suggestions are given for the teachers. First, the teachers also should be able to encourage the students to be active and fully involved in this activity. Therefore, the classroom activity and the atmosphere can be more enthusiastic and livelier. Second, the teachers should find and select the materials such as news records and news articles which are appropriate with their level of ability. Third, the teachers are supposed to monitor students' writing or give language help in the writing process.

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