

INCREASING STUDENT'S RESEARCH WRITING BY APPLYING RESEARCH BASED INSTRUCTION

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Abstract

Recently, a promising model of teaching and learning is an engagement of students and teacher into theory and practice of learning. Doing a more theoretical and discussion models of learning are good to make students understand a topic, but in contrast they are not good in practice. A combination of less theoretical and more practical model of learning, called research-based learning, which allows students to learn things in practice and to train them to analyze and criticize situations deeply, was developed to help students learning various topics based on researches and practice their critical analysis. This study focused on the investigation to see students experience in learning writing skills through the application of research based instruction and see how the model of learning gives them chance to finish their Skripsi (a research project conducted as a prerequisite of a bachelor degree). Subjects in this study were 60 EFL students enrolled in the Seminar on Language class at English Department of the Faculty of Letters and Cultures in Universitas Negeri Gorontalo. By applying an action research method, students showed significant changes in critical learning performance. The investigation included 2 systematic cycles – Planning, Action, Observation, and Reflection. The results of the study showed that the application of RBI was helpful for the students to help them finishing their final project (the Skripsi), particularly for students of English Department. Most students perceived positively toward the Research based Instruction in the learning process.

Keywords: *Research based Instruction, Writing, Learning Practice*

A. Introduction

Language is a communication tool in one's interaction with others. It becomes an intermediary tool delivery and receives vital information. Talking about language means we interpret ideas, ideas, thoughts, and feelings contained in the words are arranged in a neat and has a meaning that is understandable by users. Creation of language in society shows great significance in the relationship of everyday communication.

Language skills consist of one unified skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Writing and speaking are productive skills, while reading and listening are receptive skills are interrelated with each other to demonstrate the ability of human language. The four skills are taught from a young age of the children and strengthened until it reaches the age of maturity. Although actually there is nothing more important to each other because everything needed to build communication, but the language users and teachers continue to experience problems in the build quality of the self through the language skills.

Writing, one of the four language skills, has received serious attention from teachers and students through English language learning process at university today. It not only can be used to see student's ideas, feelings, and thought, but also writing skills train students to be more creative during their studies. This language skill might be complex sometime when one deals with his or her knowledge, mind analysis, and ways of communication during the learning process. Zamel reported (1982), "One of Emig's most important findings was that writing involved."

Many teachers, at university, think that various ways of teaching and learning, the results show unexpected outcomes though. It can be said that to be aware of various possible issues in the writing process might result different possible ways of coping them (Browne, 1999).

To be more specifically, student's writing achievement seemed to improve very slowly compared to other language skills. This issue certainly indicates a problem at hand and causing delays the development of their writing skills. Considering the issues presented through writing process, the problems students experience in learning writing skills need to be investigated more fully. This study investigated students experience in learning writing skills through a Research based Instruction (RbI). This model of learning proposes a critical thinking integrated learning means to attract student's interest in writing specific issues they wish to investigate.

Further, the current research aimed to investigate students experience in learning writing skills through the application of research based instruction and see how the model of learning gives them chance to finish their research project by the end of year at the university quicker than it used to be.

Literature Review

Writing in a different language involve more than mastering its vocabulary and grammar. A language, including written language, is a reflection of the thought patterns of native speakers. In order to write well in a different language, it is important to understand the way native speakers of that language organize their thoughts. That is why it rarely works to write in a native language and then translate it into English language. In fact, the words may be in English, but the logic, organization, and thought patterns reflect those of a native language (Blanchard & Root, 2004).

According to Blanchard & Root (2004), there are three elements – Subject, Purpose, and Audience – which need to be considered by a writer to produce a good writing. Further, they asserted in depth a writer should think about an angle or focus as the topic of writing. A writer usually is able to do this by narrowing down the general subject to the specific one until an appropriate topic is determined. Moreover, a purpose will tell the reason why writing the topic. It commonly is aimed to entertain, to inform, and to persuade something. Finally, the audience or to whom a writer are writing greatly affect the quality and the process of writing.

Currently there are various forms of teaching materials that have been developed to meet the needs of a variety of teaching situations are also diverse. According Oura (nn), the material consists of text EFL (English as a foreign language Language) / ESL (English as a second language), along with a cassette recording of the manual video recording with his sheet, and a variety of language learning programs (CALL). According to the researchers (Akour, 2006; Cilesiz, 2009; Hauck, & Youngs, 2008; Batson, & Feinberg, 2006; Murday, Ushida, & Chenoweth, 2008; Son, 2007; Chen, 2005; Chiu, Liou, & Yeh, 2007; Shang, 2007; Christen, Merrill, & Yanchar, 2007), this material is used for the teaching of reading, writing, speaking, listening, grammar, vocabulary, general English, communication in different directions, pronunciation, English for business courses TOEFL preparation, etc. In fact, this time developing teaching materials developed by teachers themselves based on personal approaches that they do for students they teach.

Based on the observation, in any situation faced by a teacher, he or she was still able to adapt or find a way to overcome the problem with teaching improvisation. Improvisation is done by a teacher is to utilize all its facilities without limiting the special facilities for teaching (Agustina, 2009; Widdowson, 1990). To overcome the limitations issue, most teachers are adapting or creating forms or media activities using authentic materials. Once

they use authentic materials and make observations on the students, the teachers could figure out how to put it into a teaching tool. Teaching EFL / ESL raises the question of how a teacher can find authentic materials. According to Gebhard (1996; 1999), the sources of teaching materials are unlimited. In countries, such as Indonesia, where English is used as a foreign language, teachers can try to get more creative or demonstrate creativity in determining the material he taught. Usually, they integrate these authentic materials through television, magazines, TV, radio, and articles on the Internet (Gebhard, 1996.1999; Son, 2007; Chen 2005).

Students for whom English is a second or third language (ESL) have a keen understanding of how languages work. However, they have different skills and needs than native speakers of English. Because they have to deal with competing cultural expectations and competing languages, ESL students can have special difficulties seeing problems with their writing and solving them (Wintch et al, 2006; Peacock, 1986).

According to Wen and Guo (1998), ESL speakers are often excellent students, highly motivated; their problems seldom involve a lack of ideas. Their primary writing problems typically involve difficulty expressing concepts and ideas in English. The solutions they attempt can sometimes be quite perplexing to their readers—including their professors.

Method

The current research mainly aims to investigate the difficulties students perceive in learning English writing skills. To explore this issue, the researcher employed a mode of qualitative data collection and analysis, i.e. observation, interviews and document. It aimed to find meaningful information about the issues being investigated (Creswell, 2008). This kind of research is less structured and commonly more flexible than quantitative research in certain kinds of studies (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009). However, the researchers do not interfere or manipulate a situation. They want to understand a situation or phenomenon by concentrating on the total picture instead of separating it into various small variables (Ary et al, 2006).

Observations, interviews, and document analysis are the most common methods of data collection used in a qualitative research (Ary et al, 2006). It should be noted that the researchers used a qualitative data collection strategy. Ary et al (2006) and Creswell (2008) revealed that document analysis is used to collect data and interpret current issue which is concerned with feelings, opinions, and beliefs about a situation.

The participants in the current research are 60 students from English Department at Universitas Negeri Gorontalo, Gorontalo. These students are majoring English education and are studying Seminar on Language course this semester.

The data were analysed qualitatively by looking at their research writing (Wiersma, 1991). The results were typically summarized including common descriptive information. Moreover, to gain the clear information from research writing details, the data was transcribed and analysed based on the categories of purposes of research.

B. DISCUSSION

In the previous section the researcher presented the results of the study. In this chapter the researcher explores those results in relation to the research literature, and considers sorts of student's difficulties in their learning process. The aim of this chapter is to understand what kind of problems students faced in learning writing skills. The researcher aimed to investigate students experience in learning writing skills through the application of research based instruction and see how the model of learning gives them chance to finish their research project by the end of year at the university quicker than it used to be.

Although initially a little learning is a big challenge to them, but overall the writing that students enjoy learning through the application of research based instruction. Challenges

posed by the implementation of RbI teaching model in class writing in general is the development of content that should be done by writing preceded by the collection of data or information (like doing a study) to be an important part of the contents of the writing. Furthermore, students enjoy the learning process because they pour the contents of text based information or data derived from their analysis of the environment or resource that they observe or investigation.

Furthermore, looking at the data writing their writings, the results indicated that the students were able to better organize information in writing with an idea or topic writing the settings as described by researchers on a good writing, where it should serve as a 'map' of the research, outlining to readers the main arguments and points to develop an research (Clanchy and Ballard, 1984). All of the above cases may not be how its value when compared with the case of plagiarism made by some writers. Some participants took the writings of others to be included as written only by replacing small parts of the text in order to impress is not a copy (Blanchard & Root, 2004). In most universities in the world, cases of plagiarism are very serious cases. A student who did not pass the plagiarism may be subject or even worse, expelled from the university. The above problems caused by the image that still requires a deeper analysis because in this study did not find the cause of the problems faced by writers. These cases are of course should not only underestimated. Students need remedial teaching in order to concretely improve the quality of the students and their writing.

In writing that is shown by the participants, when in fact reviewed the contents of the Paragraphs indicated supporting facts and specific details as well as a good example. However, because it is not complemented by a reference or source of the data from which they obtain it, then the impression raised by the content writing is plagiarism. Ideally, researchers assessed that it is impossible for a post by showing the facts without indicating the reference or information source. This explanation clearly gives an opinion that actually requires evidentiary data will be accurate. If this is not proved by the results of studies experts will impress nonsense of the writers (Oshima & Hogue, 2006; Blanchard & Root, 2004). In general, the important issue faced by the participants was the existence of cases of plagiarism as shown by their writings. Written evidence that demonstrated by the number of participants (NM and UA) show that plagiarism is indeed the case which is common at the time the author began his writing career (Oshima & Hogue, 2006; Blanchard & Root, 2004).

Furthermore, the use of details in the explanation of research s does not ever happen, because some students wrote the body of writings in a list of sentences. Surely, this is contrast with how an essay is structured where researches are built up of a series of paragraphs which all contribute to establishing the writer's purpose (Clanchy, Ballard, 1984; Oshima & Hogue, 2006; Blanchard & Root, 2004; Legal Studies, 2006; Education Development Unit, N.D.; UniLearning, 2000). Supporting Paragraphs in the form of a list describing as if the participant as the writer does not understand what the meaning of writing. Oshima and Hogue (2006) clearly reveals that a writing of essay consists of several Paragraphs that have long sentences and not merely in the form of a list of short sentences.

The conclusion serves to give the reader closure, summing up the research's points or providing a final viewpoint about the topic. The conclusion should consist of three or four convincing sentences. In addition, students forget that the function of the research 's Conclusion is to restate the main argument in the body of writing (Clanchy and Ballard, 1984; Legal Studies, 2006; Education Development Unit, N.D.; UniLearning, 2000). Clearly review the main points, being careful not to restate them exactly, or briefly describe your opinion about the topic.

A problem faced by the participants in their writing is not the inclusion of the concluding paragraphs in the essays they created. Most of them just ended up writing on the body Paragraphs. Surely this is contrary to the description of the contents of an essay itself.

An essay should consist of the introduction, Body Paragraphs, and a Concluding paragraph (Clanchy, Ballard, 1984; Oshima & Hogue, 2006; Blanchard & Root, 2004). This case certainly requires a great attention from the teachers of this subject.

C. CONCLUSION

The current research on the application of Research based Instruction on student's essay writing results showed that had less problems in these three parts of essay. More specifically, though it is considered very important for an essay to give thesis statement in essay writing, many students did not put it in the introduction of their essay. Furthermore, Blanchard and Root (2004) stated that introduction as one part of the essay involves anecdotes, Quotations, questions, facts and statistics, and thesis statement. It has already been explained that the use of thesis statement will explain the idea of writing or writing from a general theme to be specific, while Quotations will give a clearer picture to the reader to the contents of writings as well illustrates the size of the writer's understanding of his writings. In the introduction, students did not clearly state a quotation like most of them did not consider putting thesis statement.

Moreover, there were some students wrote questions in their essay introduction to open the body of essay. Although questions in the introduction are permitted in writing an introduction in an essay, but that does not mean it can be presented in the form of questions and answers (Blanchard & Root, 2004). If questions and answers are already presented in the introduction, then it will be very difficult for the writer to develop his writing. Normally the body paragraphs or supporting details are the answer to the question posted in the introduction. Further, author found problems in writing the body of essay. A body paragraph in an essay is a collection of ideas that supports the topic of paragraphs (Oshima & Hogue, 2006). Students presented good supporting facts and specific detail without references or sources of the data. Ideally, researchers assessed that it is impossible for a post by showing the facts without indicating the reference or information source. This explanation clearly gives an opinion that actually requires evidentiary data will be accurate. If this is not proved by the results of studies experts will impress nonsense of the writers or a plagiarism issue (Oshima & Hogue, 2006; Blanchard & Root, 2004). Moreover, supporting Paragraphs in the form of a list describing as if the participant as the writer did not understand what an essay is. Oshima and Hogue (2006) clearly revealed that the essay consists of several Paragraphs that have long sentences and not merely in the form of a list of short sentences.

All issues above may be nothing compared to the issue of plagiarism. Some participants took the writings of others only by replacing small parts of the text in order to impress readers that it was not a copy (Blanchard & Root, 2004). In most universities in the world, issue of plagiarism is very crucial. A student who did not pass the plagiarism may be subject or even worse, expelled from the university.

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