

IMPROVING STUDENTS' WRITING ABILITY THROUGH WRITING TASKS OF THE SECOND YEAR STUDENTS AT SMAN 2 SIAKHULU KAMPAR DISTRICT

Sri Wahyuni, M.Pd

English Study Program, Language and art Department, Teachers Training and Education Faculty, Islamic University of Riau

Sriwahyuni220989@gmail.com

Abstract

Writing is not a spontaneous product so that it needs to take much time for making in good one. Writing tasks present to help students to organize their idea, write their idea into paragraph or sentence, then revise their writing, and the last, publish their final writing. Thus, The objective of this research was to know whether there is a significant improvement on students' writing ability after using writing tasks, especially in Hortatory Exposition. The research design was pre-experimental research focusing on quantitative approach and involved 39 students of the second year students at SMAN 2 Siakhulu Kampar District, Riau, Indonesia as the samples. Cluster random sampling technique was used by the writer to take the sample. The technique of data collection was writing test. The data were gathered from the result of students' writing ability in pre-test and post-test. The research finding has shown that the alternative hypothesis was accepted. The amount of improvement made from the pre-test and post-test in the experimental group that taught by writing task was 19.92 (51.07%). This improvement was also shown by the standard deviation of pre-test and post-test which was 0.75, it could be concluded that the use of writing tasks was effective in giving better result on improving students' writing ability of the second year students at SMAN 2 Siakhulu Kampar District.

Keywords: Improving, Writing Ability, Writing Tasks

Introduction

Writing is one of four skills that must be mastered in learning English by students. In English learning process, writing is not easy work. It takes time to study and practice as to develop this skill. For both native speakers and novice learners of English, it is important to note that writing is a process, not a product. Writing is not a spontaneous product. Meaning that a piece of writing, whether it is a composition of English class or a short story, is never complete; that is possible to review and revise, and review and revise again.

Within teaching learning process, the skill of writing enjoys special status; it is writing that a person can communicate a variety message to a close or distant, know or unknown readers. Such communication is extremely important in modern world, whether interaction takes the form of traditional paper and pencil writing or the most advanced electronic mail. Writing as a communication activity needs to be encouraged and nurtured during the language learners' course of study.

Moreover, students have to write well in order to be able to convey their ideas and achieve the goal of learning. To convey their ideas, student have to develop them into a good paragraph. Actually, for making a good paragraph, students have to write based on the components of writing. Writing has some components that need to be integrated properly to make a good paragraph or other writing products those are: content, organization, vocabulary, and mechanics.

Based on the researcher's experience as an alumnus, the writer found out that the students got difficulties to construct paragraph. They constructed the paragraph ungrammatical and less successful when they were assigned to write a paragraph. Beside that, they got problems in organizing their ideas. Sometimes they could not connect their ideas between one and others. It was caused by some factors such as lack of vocabulary, grammar, and lack of background knowledge in English itself.

For those, many efforts have been done by English teacher to improve students' ability in writing. After teaching writing to the students, the teacher gave task for students but she did not do each stages of writing task properly. So, the good writing couldn't be achieved.

Task is an activity which required learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought, and which allowed teachers to control and regulate that process. The tasks are as a practice for students to improve students' writing ability step by step. Students have to plan their writing, do revision, share, edit, and publish their writing.

By giving tasks to the students, it can be a way for students to increase the product of their writing well, either in aspects of content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. To reach a qualified writing product, of course, students have to do each stages of writing tasks to make writing effectively.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher believes that writing is very important to be mastered by every English learners. In this case, an effective way to improve their writing ability should be done by

the learners. Consequently, the researcher was interested in carrying out a research entitled: "improving students' writing ability through writing tasks of the second year students at SMAN 2 Siakulu Kampar District".

Brief Review of Related Theories

According to Harmer (2001) states that writing is the productive skill in the written mode. It is more complicated than it seems at first, and often seems to be the hardest of the skills, even for native speakers of a language, since it involves not just a graphic representation of speech, but the development and presentation of thoughts in a structured way. Moreover, According to Scholes and Claus (1972) states that writing is a natural activity. They say writing must be taught formally and studied deliberately. Therefore, writing is activities of the writer in expressing their ideas in written form.

Furthermore, According to J.D Angelo (1989) writing is a form of thinking. Writing helps students to think effectively. While writing, the student keep their purpose in mind, think about the fact will they need to select which relevant to their purpose, and think about how to organize facts in a coherent. He also concludes that the process in writing is a process of learning to think actively and clearly.

From the explanation above, writing is a productive skill and natural activity that must be taught in a school in a structured way. Beside that writing is the way of communication in written form. By writing, students are able to develop their critical thinking. In other hand, writing is very important to be mastered by the students.

In learning writing, the students have faced many problems. As we know, writing is not an easy work. It is possible to be found in learning writing because writing is not a spontaneous product. It is important to note that writing is a process, not a product. The students need time to study and practice to develop this skill. According to Harmer (2001) in writing, there are problems with grammar, vocabulary, handwriting, spelling, layout, and punctuation. It means that good content of writing only is not enough. A writer must also have sufficient language components like grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, and spelling to facilitate him/her in expressing his/her ideas, experiences, thoughts, and feelings. The writing should be organized well in order to be able to be easily read and understood by the readers.

According to Richard (2003) states that good writing means writing that contains no bad mistake that is, no errors of grammar, punctuation, or spelling. In fact, good writing is much more than just correct writing.

According to Steve Pehu (2003) good writing has: (1) ideas those interesting and important, (2) organization that is logical and effective, (3) vocabulary that is specific and memorable, (4) sentence fluency that smooth and expressive, (5) conventions those are correct and communicative.

Based on the theories above, the researcher concludes that writing should be organized well. A good writing is not about how to write correctly but also in a good content. In this study, the components of writing have been investigated are Grammar, Vocabulary, Mechanics, and Organization/ Content. Remembering the importance of process writing in learning, the researcher used writing tasks in learning writing. According to Jones and Shaw (2003) point out that writing tasks need to give all learners opportunity to perform to their utmost abilities.

According to MIT writing and Communication center (1999), writing is a process involves at least four distinct steps: Pre-writing, Drafting, Revising, and Editing. Then, the commonalities among the procedures suggested by the main figures of writing task all include the stages of Pre-writing such as Brainstorming and Planning, Writing the Rough Draft, Editing, Proof Reading, and Publishing the final draft (Ozaga: 2004).

The first is Pre-Writing. This stages includes anything the students does before writing a draft of one's document, such as thinking, taking notes, talking to others, brainstorming, outlining, and gathering information. When students spend time thinking about the writing process, they get enabled to plan their strategies more effectively.

The second is Draft Writing, it is also called Drafting, writing the rough draft comes when learners get their ideas on paper by organizing them in sentences and paragraphs. Walsh (2004) calls draft quick write-out where students do not worry about the form or mechanics. The draft tends to be writer-centered; it is you telling yourself what you know and what you think about the topic. In case, the students have had sufficient pre-planning and organization, the drafting stage can be both a gratifying and efficient experience. Students should not feel forced to write chronologically. Sometimes the conclusion can be easier place to begin with than the thesis statement. With each writing assignment, students will be able to find a personal system that work best for them.

The third is revising, this is the process of reviewing the paper on the ideal level. This process may involve changes such as the clarification of the thesis, the reorganization of paragraphs, and the omission of the extra information. It can be done by the teacher and peers' reading.

The fourth is Editing. After improving the quality in revising stages, students need to take care of mechanics including corrections of spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. This is the last step before publishing the final product. It is called proofreading as well which deals with "how you write" (MIT Centre: 1999). According to Stanley (2003), good writers must learn how to evaluate their own language to improve through checking their own text, looking for errors, and structure (Self-editing). This way, students will become better writers. However, the teacher can provide more guidance during editing and/ or proof reading with students to set an example (Ozagic, 2004). If these types of editing are accompanied by peer type, the greatest impact will be produced.

The last step is Publishing. After making sure that the final draft is produced and has been checked for surface level mistakes beside the content and general organization, the writing could be published. According to Gardner and Johnson (1997) states that learners could do this by reading out their written pieces loud for the whole class or for their peers in groups or pairs. Part of the advantages is that they can receive feedback on their completed work immediately after they have been produced.

In conclusion, The objective of this research was to know whether there is a significant improvement on students' writing ability after using writing tasks.

Data Analysis and Discussion

The research design was pre-experimental research focusing on quantitative approach. This research used pre-experimental design which is one group pre-test and post treatment test design (Nunan: 1992). It involved one group as the experimental group without the control group. the research was conducted at SMAN 2 Siakhulu Kampar District. By using simple random sampling, the researcher had chosen one class as experimental group consist of 39 students that taught by using writing tasks. the research instrument was writing test.

After collecting data from the result of Pre-test and Pos-test, it had shown the students' score increased from pre-test and post-test of experimental group. then, the testing of hypothesis could be conducted. The analysis of data and discussion would be presented below.

Table 1. The improvement of Indicators in Writing

Indicators	Pre-Test	Post-Test
	Mean (\bar{X})	Mean (\bar{X})
Organization/ Content	26, 05	30, 00
Grammar	16, 92	24, 84
Vocabulary	11, 64	17, 64
Mechanics	9, 53	11, 59

In table 1 above could be seen the improvement of each Indicators in Writing. The highest improvement was in Grammar and Mechanics. It means that writing tasks was really helpful for students to develop their writing effectively, especially in good sentences arrangement.

Table 2. The Average Score and Standard Deviation of Pre-test and Post Test

	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Significant Difference
Mean (\bar{X})	64, 15	84, 07	19, 92
Standard Deviation (S)	9, 44	10, 19	0, 75

From the Table 2 above, the average score (Mean) of Pre-test was 64, 15 and the average score (Mean) of Post-test was 84, 07. Therefore the significant different mean between the pre-test and pot-test was 19, 92. Then, the standard deviation of Pre-test 9, 44 and Post-test 10, 19. The significance difference standard deviation between Pre-test and Post test was 0, 75. It has been already seen from the table 1, the amount of improvement made from the Pre-test and Post-test in the experimental group that taught by writing tasks was 19, 92 (31, 07%). This improvement was also shown by the standard deviaton of Pre-test and Post-test which was 0, 75.

Table 3. The Improvement of Students' Score

	N	Mean	Improvement	Df	t-test	t-table
Pre-Test	39	64, 15	19, 92~	38	-25, 56	2, 03
Post-Test	39	84, 07	31, 07%			

Table 3 showed that there was a progression of students' writing ability after they had been taught through writing tasks for 19, 92 or 51, 07%. Beside that, it could be turned to t-distribution level to find out whether Null hypothesis was rejected or accepted. In alpha decision level (α) 0,05 and with the degree of freedom (df) 38. It was found that t_{table} was 2, 03. It could be concluded that $t_0 > t_1$, H_0 was rejected.

Conclusion and Suggestion

Overall, it could be concluded that the students' writing ability had improved through writing tasks. It could be seen from the students' score of Post-test, the students in experimental group made increasing 51, 07%. The use of writing task in teaching writing facilitated the students to organize their ideas before writing, construct their idea into paragraph/ paragraphs or sentence, revise their paragraph/ paragraphs or sentence, edit their paragraph/ paragraphs or sentence, and publish their writing to other students in front of the class. By applying writing tasks, more meaningful learning environment could be created and each stages of writing tasks facilitated students to write effectively and gradually. Writing tasks also made students to be motivated, interested, and active. Each these stages of writing tasks made the students thinking critically and became active in learning. Moreover, the use of writing tasks in teaching writing was an effective way because it trained the students to create a good writing product. By doing each stages of writing tasks process, students could solve their problem in writing that related to Organization, Grammar, Vocabulary, and Mechanics. In other words, writing tasks was able to help students to have good writing ability.

Dealing with the result of this research, it is expected that the English teachers had to show more concern about their students' writing ability. They can apply writing tasks to help students to write effectively without forcing the students and achieve the goal of learning itself. All these can help to improve students' writing ability. Furthermore, the students are expected to be more active in taking part in writing activities. To improve their writing ability not only in the classroom but also outside of the classroom. The last, these research findings are expected to give significant contribution to the following researchers who wished to carry out a research on the same topic of discussion or the following researchers can do other researchs by applying writing tasks to improve class discussion and understanding and retention of concept.

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