

**IMPROVING STUDENTS' WRITING SKILL ON RECOUNT TEXT
THROUGH PERSONAL JOURNAL WRITING**

AN ARTICLE

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IMPROVING STUDENTS' WRITING SKILL ON RECOUNT TEXT THROUGH PERSONAL JOURNAL WRITING

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Abstract: The aim of this research is to solve the problem that was encountered by the students in finding appropriate and correct past verb tense. This research was conducted on the eleventh grade students of SMK PGRI Pontianak in academic year 2015/2016. The data were collected by using direct and measurement technique. The researcher conducted a classroom action research in her research and acted as the collaborator during the research period. The tools of data collecting were observation checklist, field note, and test. This research was done in 3 cycles by using personal jurnal writing. The students' first mean score was 69.9 which categorized as poor. The students' second cycle mean score 75.61 which was qualified as good, but the process of learning did not improve yet. Therefore, the research was conducted in the third cycle which showed the significant improvement of the learning process and the students achieved KKM score in the third cycle.

Keywords: *Writing skill, Recount text, Personal Journal Writing*

Abstract: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan siswa dalam menggunakan kata kerja bentuk lampau yang benar. Penelitian ini telah dilakukan terhadap siswa kelas SMK PGRI Pontianak pada tahun akademik 2015/2016. Peneliti menggunakan metode penelitian tindakan kelas dan berperan sebagai kolaborator selama masa penelitian berlangsung. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan teknik penilaian dan observasi langsung dengan menggunakan tabel pemeriksaan, catatan lapangan, dan tes. Tehnik yang digunakan adalah *personal journal writing* dan dilaksanakan dalam 2 siklus. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan skor rata-rata tes siswa pada siklus pertama adalah 69,9 yang dikategorikan buruk menjadi 75,61 pada siklus kedua akan tetapi proses pembelajaran belum meningkat. Jadi siklus ketiga dilaksanakan dan peningkatan proses belajar dan nilai rata-rata terlihat. Berdasarkan hasil tersebut, dapat disimpulkan bahwa pemahaman siswa terhadap kosakata, khususnya pada arti dan pengejaan kata dapat meningkat melalui pengajaran menggunakan *personal journal writing*

Kata kunci: *Kemampuan menulis, teks Recount, Personal Journal Writing*

Writing skill is the last language skill to be acquired for native speakers of the language as well as for foreign/second language learners. It is a way to express their thoughts and feelings about what they have read, seen or experienced. Based on the syllabus of Educational Level Unit Curriculum (KTSP), writing skill has been one of the skill that students should be required. For vocational high school level, there are some texts that students should be able to write such as narrative text, procedure text, descriptive text, and recount text. Each text has their own characteristics and levels of difficulties to write. In writing recount text, the students should know how to write the recount text correctly. They must know the generic structure of recount text. They must know to use the form of simple past tense correctly. Writing recount text can be easy because the students just have to recall their memory about what they did in the past.

The researcher did the observation in class when having teaching practices in X grade of TAV Class. Most of the students of X grade of TAV Class of SMK PGRI Pontianak faced difficulties in writing recount text. When the researcher interviewed the teacher, she said that most of students face the difficulty in writing recount text because of the simple past tense. It could be seen when the teacher asked them to write a recount text. They have the difficulty in finding the appropriate and correct past verb tense.

In teaching learning process, the teacher used lecturing technique. The teacher does not apply appropriate technique which is able to attract students' interest in writing and give them feedback in their writing. The students do not get the detail correction of their error in writing and do not feel confident in writing their ideas in retelling their past experience. Based on the interview to the teacher, the teacher assumed that the technique used is not effective to help the students to write recount text well. Based on those problems, the researcher would like to help teacher to solve the students' difficulties in writing recount text through appropriate strategy to be implemented in the class. An appropriate strategy offered by the researcher is by using personal journal writing which has not been used by the teacher.

Personal journal in this research is the process of recording her/ his personal experiences of classroom and life activity, reflection, and occurrences. Quirke (2014:22) states, "Journal Writing: Students write whatever they want and decide if they want to share their writing and with whom. All the teacher needs to see is that something has been written. If students choose to share their writing with the teacher, the teacher should respond to the content." Based on that statements, the teacher should give feedback in students' writing. The feedback is not only about negative feedback or correction of the language, but also the positive feedback or the praise about something good in their writing.

Personal journal has been used and proved effectively for improving students' writing by some researcher. Ruzilawati (2010) in the conclusion of her thesis on pre-experimental research (Improving Students' Recount Text Writing Skills Through Personal Journal Writing) writes:

Teaching writing skills through personal journal writing can increase the students' achievement. It is shown by the students' score in post test which is better than pre-test. This technique has been found to be an effective and productive means of arousing interest in writing, which, at the same time, develops fluency of expression. It also helps students to become aware of why they wish to communicate their ideas and to regard writing not only as a means of personal expression, but also a dialogue in written language with the reader.

The researcher purposed personal journal writing because this strategy provides the teacher to respond students' journal in a friendly, non-threatening manner. These responses are recorded in the student journal which serves as the written conversation. In personal journal, students can write the detail of their experience as well as their comments, reactions, and reflections on that particular event. The important thing is the content comes from students is based on their experiences. Langan (2000:14) writes, "Writing a journal will help students develop the habit of thinking on paper and show students how ideas can be discovered in the process of writing."

Based on the facts above, the teacher is interested in overcoming those problems in improving students' writing skill on recount text through personal journal writing to eleventh grade students of TAV class of SMK PGRI Pontianak in academic year 2015/2016.

METHOD

The method used of the research is Classroom Action Research. Classroom action research is research carried out in the classroom by the teacher, because classroom action research can solve problem or improving the teaching/learning process. According to Burns (2010:19): "Classroom action research into is divided into four steps: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting."

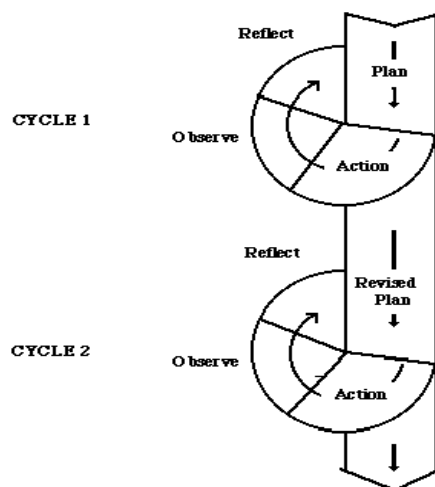


Figure 1: Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) cited in Burns (2010:9)

1. Planning

Planning is the stage to identify a problem or issue and to develop a plan of action in order to bring about improvements in a specific area of the research context. This is a forward-looking phase where we consider:

- 1) What kind of investigation is possible within the realities and constraints of your teaching situation
- 2) What potential improvements we think are possible.

The writer and teacher will prepare lesson plan, supported material, and preparing the instrument for giving a test that used in research process. The writer will also prepare observation checklist and field notes and give training to the teacher how to use personal journal writing in the classroom. The observation checklist will refer to the students' response while the teacher is using the teaching technique. The field note is referred to everything that happened in the stages of classroom action research.

2. Acting

Action is the stage where the researcher applies the strategy that has been planned before. In other words, this stage is a step to act the plan in the real treatment for the students. In this stage, the teacher will teach the lesson that has already been prepared by using personal journal writing. The procedures are:

- Every student will be given a topic to write their journal
- The students will be explained how they are going to write their journals.
- The students are asked to keep a personal journal, select a time of day for them to write in it and stick to that time every day.
- The teacher sets a time limit for journal writing (15-20 minutes) and uses a timer so students know when they should be finished.
- The teacher collects, reads and responds to journals at the end of the meeting to anything that the students have written.

Meanwhile, the collaborator will do the observation process by using the observation checklist and field notes.

3. Observing

This phase the researcher observes systematically the effects of the action and documents the context, actions and opinions of those involved. It is a stage to gather evidence and analyze whether the treatment, strategies or solution is successful or not. The collaborator will take notes and observe what actually will happen during the teaching learning process by using observation checklist and field notes.

4. Reflecting

At this stage, the writer will reflect on, evaluate and describe the effects of the action in order to make sense of what has happened and to understand the issues which have been explored more clearly. In this step, the teacher and the collaborator

share, analyze, and evaluate the information which are obtained from the classroom observation activities and the notes taken by them to getting feedback on what have done. This activity is done after the teaching process. In this stage, the writer may decide to do further cycles of CAR to improve the situation or stop the cycle.

The teacher who participated in this research was an English teacher of eleventh grade of TAV class of SMK PGRI Pontianak. She acted as the teacher in applying personal journal writing. She graduated S1 degree from English study program of Teachers Training and Education Faculty of Tanjungpura University. The writer, as collaborator, observed the teaching learning process. The subject of this research will be 18 students of the eleventh grade students of TAV class of SMK PGRI Pontianak in academic year 2015/2016.

The writer will use observation checklist and field notes. The purpose of the observation is to know the activities during teaching and learning process, such as how the teacher will explain the materials, what will the student's respond and how will the students' work in doing the test. The writer also use test in order to know the students' improvement in writing recount text. The writer will use written test in form of writing an essay about the students' holiday or students' past activity.

In this research the writer will use observation checklist sheet, field note and written test. The observation checklist will be used to observe the students behaviour during conducting personal journal writing in classroom activity in the form of checklist table. Field notes are notes made by the writer. It is a contemporaneous notes of observations taken during the teaching and learning process. The collaborator will write down anything occurred during the application of the technique, including the obstacle that the teacher and collaborator will find in teaching learning process. Written test is frequently used to measure students' writing ability. The writer will use written test in this research because the writer want to measure how much students' improvement in writing recount text through personal journal writing. The writer will ask the students to write about what they did on the students' last holiday or their past experience in the form of essay.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In conducting this research, the researcher applied Classroom Action Research. This method of this research was intended to solve the problems found in the classroom. The problem found in the eleventh grade students of TAV Class of SMK PGRI Pontianak who face difficulty in choosing the correct past verbs. The implementation of personal journal writing in this research was to improve students' personal journal writing especially in writing recount text with the correct past verbs.

This research was conducted in three cycles. Every cycle consists of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting stage as Classroom Action Research procedures. In the first cycle, the acting stage was conducted in one meeting that was on Thursday, September 24th, 2015. In the second cycle, the acting stage was conducted on Tuesday, October 6th, 2015. The third cycle was conducted as one meeting on Thursday, October 8th, 2015. After the researcher gave the materials, implemented

personal journal writing, and the students did the test, the researcher computed the students' score and classified the mean score into the qualification. All those steps were done to obtain the research findings.

First cycle (September 24th, 2015)

The researcher made a lesson plan and discussed how to do it with the teacher. The lesson plan was based on syllabus and Educational Level Unit Curriculum (KTSP). The lesson plan consisted of the teaching material about the language features and generic structure of recount text, the task using personal journal writing and the topic for students to write their recount text. The researcher prepared the teaching-learning media, such as the sample text and a picture that related to the topic which is about holiday theme. The reason in selecting that topic was because they were back to school after holiday. The researcher also prepared some media that was needed such as laptop, projector, and wide screen. Then, the researcher prepared observation checklist for collecting the data during the observing stage.

The first cycle was conducted in one meeting that was on Thursday, September 24th, 2015 at 11:50 A.M. till 12:20 P.M. The researcher did the procedures of teaching learning process based on the lesson plan in which the teaching learning process was divided into three activities: pre-activity, whilst-activity, and post activity. Based on observation checklist, field note and students' test score, the researcher concluded that the result in all of the stages still needed improvement so that the researcher decided to conduct the second cycle to improve their writing skill on recount text by using personal journal writing.

Second cycle (October 6th, 2015)

The second cycle was conducted in one meeting that was on Tuesday, October 6th, 2015. Based on the reflection of the first cycle, the teacher and the collaborator found some problems. The problems were the students were confused in choosing the correct past verbs and they were lacked of sources to find the list of past verbs. In order to solve this problem, the teacher and the collaborator decided to borrow some dictionaries from the library and made some lists of past verbs. The other problem was collaborator observed that some students were not interested in writing and did not do the task well therefore the collaborator designed an activity using personal journal writing with fun way and encouraged the students. The video of a student who is writing in a journal was prepared as a media in the second cycle. The collaborator and the the teacher also did a discussion about the lesson plan. The collaborator prepared the observation checklist and field notes and also a reward for students who did well in the activity. Based on observation checklist, field note and students' test score, the researcher concluded that the teaching learning process was not satisfying yet. There were some students who did not involve in the learning and were still confused in writing recount text. Based on these problems, the teacher and the collaborator needed to conduct the third cycle.

(Third cycle October 8th, 2015)

The third cycle was conducted in one meeting that was on Thursday, October 8th, 2015. Based on the reflection of the second cycle, the teacher and the collaborator would solve some problems in this cycle and also see the improvement of the process in teaching and learning recount text by using personal journal writing. The collaborator and the teacher did a discussion about the lesson plan. There was a change in order to make the students got understand with recount text and simple past tense. The collaborator prepared the observation checklist and field notes and also rewards for students who did well in the activity. Based on observation checklist, field note and students' test score, the researcher concluded that the teaching learning process was not satisfying and successful. The teaching learning process was better than the second cycle. All of students were actively involved.

This classroom action research was conducted in three cycles. Based on the observation data, the students' participation in the first cycle was still low, because almost all of the students were still confused in applying the past verbs, and the students did not bring their dictionary or list of verb changes. The score did not fulfill the standard score yet that was 75 and they got their average was 69.91, so that the teacher and collaborator planned the second cycle.

For the second cycle, the teacher managed the class well and helped students during teaching learning process so that the students were active, enthusiastic and gave the positive response. During teaching learning process, the students actively wrote down the material and focused the material. They actively asked the questions to the teacher. There was an improvement in their score in writing recount text in the second cycle. Despite of this improvement, the teaching learning process was still unsatisfying. Their mean score was 75.61 which is "Average".

In the third cycle, all the students showed their improvement in the teaching learning proces and even in their score. The students' mean score was 88.77 and qualified into "Good". This result was suported by their individual score. They were actively involved in all of activity and wrote seriously in writing their own past experience through personal journal writing.

The explanation and description of the improvements above led the researcher to the conclusion that this research was conducted in three cycles, because there was improvement from the first cycle to the third cycle. Personal journal writing provides students with good opportunities to improve their writing skills individually and good chances to record their thoughts and feelings. As Tuan (2010) in his thesis *Enhancing EFL Learners' Writing Skill via Journal Writing* writes:

The benefits of journal writing as an extensive activity to nurture learners' writing motivation and boost their writing skill as well as to establish a close rapport between teachers and learners. Through reading and responding to learners' journal entries, teachers are able to measure each learner's competence and understand their needs, thoughts, and feelings, which helps teachers accommodate their teaching ways to learners' preferences and give learners appropriate assistance to their problems along the writing course.

The students' writing skill on recount text was better through personal journal writing. The students were more confident everytime after writing their past experience and got feedback from the teacher. The teacher were more closed to their students, because the students shared their past experiences and their feelings in it.

In conclusion, the researcher argued that teaching writing a recount text through personal journal writing need to be continued because it did improved students' writing skill on recount text. Therefore, the researcher concluded the action hypothesis which states "The improvement of students' writing skill on recount text through personal journal writing is good"

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

From the findings of Classroom Action research (CAR) which has been held in XI TAV class of SMK PGRI Pontianak in academic year 2015/2016, the activities were based on the observation checklist and field note and the result of the test students' writing skill on recount text of the first cycle, second cycle, and the third cycle have improved. The researcher concludes as that the use of personal journal writing improves students' in writing recount text. This was proved by the result of mean score of students' individual test. In the first cycle, the mean score of the students' individual test was 69.9 and the mean score of the students' individual score in the second cycle was 75.61. The third cycle was 88.77.

The improvement is not only in the mean score, but also in the process of learning in the classroom. The teaching learning process was improved by using personal journal writing in teaching writing recount text. This was proved by the result of the field notes and observation checklist from the first cycle and the third cycle. The students showed better result in the process of the students in writing recount text with correct past verbs.

Suggestion

The researcher provides some suggestions in this research, those are:

1. Personal journal writing is recommended for the teacher to be applied since the researcher has found out this strategy is able to improve the students' writing on recount text.
2. Teacher should be more active in motivating and giving the positive feedback for the students' writing.
3. The teacher should motivate the students in order to encourage them to write and offer them help while they are writing.
4. Personal journal writing can be applied to teach writing to the level of senior high school or vocational High School, for every level.
5. This researcher can be a reference for other researcher to conduct other relevant research.

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