

Improving Students' Writing Ability by Using Contextual Teaching and Learning

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Abstract

This research is aimed at finding the effect of using Contextual Teaching and Learning Strategy toward students' ability in writing. It was an experimental research. The population of this research was students at SMPN 31 Padang, Class VIII. The sample was chosen by using cluster sampling technique. In collecting the data, the researcher used treatment in teaching as long as eight meetings. The researcher gave pretest and posttest to the students in order to know students' improvement in writing after giving treatment. The result of this research showed that Contextual Teaching and Learning Strategy gave significant effect toward students' writing ability.

Key words: effect, Contextual Teaching and Learning Strategy, students' writing

INTRODUCTION

Writing is an expression outlet for self communication. It is a way to cronile someone personal reactions and journeys. As the tool of communication, writing has importance role to be used by human to do interaction in their life. Writing subject had been learned since the students were at elementary school up to college level and it had been a formal matter of Indonesia education curriculum since English becomes knowledge which is necessary in education.

Furthermore, writing is not easy to learn. According to Diaz and Rico (2004:167), to have the effective writing product, the students need time and opportunity to write as a regular means to develop their fluency. As stated in Standard of School-based Curriculum (2006), through writing, the students will know how to practice their vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation that will be needed in other skills. In writing, students can express their thought, experience and their own feelings. The teacher can help the students by teaching them how to make a good writing by getting ideas, choosing ideas, making outline, drafting, revising, and editing.

However, teaching writing is not an easy thing. Teaching writing is not only the activity where the teacher teach their students about how to write their idea in written

form, but also teacher should lead the students make their writing easy to be understood by having good grammatical and appropriate vocabularies. Harmer (2004:44) states that teaching writing is the activity where the students write predominantly to increase their learning and vocabularies. So, the students also learn about the grammatical and develop their vocabularies through learning writing. They can learn how to choose the appropriate vocabulary for their writing. They also can understand how to use correct grammatical when they are writing.

Moreover, teaching writing has its own difficulties. The teachers could not make the students to be interested in writing lesson because the teacher always teaches writing in the same way; the teacher did not make a variation in teaching process and teacher always lost the students attention when they taught to their students. The teacher always used the same strategy and there was no variation of the strategy itself.

Meanwhile, the students often got bored in learning writing. They did not know how to write and how to start. They got difficulty to start their writing, they did not how to use transitional signal when they wanted to write. It seems that they were in doubt in using transition signal that would make their writing bad.

As a result, a strategy is important to be done by the teachers during their teaching activity. Creative strategy can give big contribution to students in learning English, especially in learning writing. They need a new strategy to make the class interesting and guide them to start writing. It is assumed that the strategy that was used by the teachers was not effective to improve students' writing ability.

Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) strategy is the strategy that can be used in learning activity. This strategy helps the teacher to lead the students learn from the real situation or the context of lesson. Herrel (2001: 26) explains that Contextual Teaching and Learning strategy is a strategy that emphasizes involvement of the children in full process to be able to find materials to lead and connect the teacher with real situation. The same idea also stated by Sears (2003:3), she states that Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) is a concept that helps teachers relate subject matter to real world situation. So, Contextual Teaching and Learning strategy is a strategy that used by the teacher in learning process based on the students' experience in their environment.

In addition, Berns and Erickson (2001:4) note that the use of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) can be effective in students learning, the teacher should plant, implement, reflect upon, and revise lesson. The teacher can be a facilitator, organizer of the teaching or learning or assessment process, role model, learning mentor, content specialist, and knowledge dispenser. In order to connect the students' knowledge with their real-life situation, these roles have to be implemented by the teachers in teaching and learning process if they are going to use CTL strategy. So that, the CTL strategy will run in the class well.

According to Johnson and Johnson in Satriani, et al. (2012:19), the characteristics of CTL are: (a) Improve the understanding that will students learn more effectively through self-learning, self-inquiring, and self-constructing using their own knowledge and experience. Teacher needs to encourage student to be actively involved in learning process and use the students' idea and experience to conduct the learning and whole learning unit; (b) Do the inquiring activity to achieve desired competences in writing activity. The teacher presents the writing material in which the students need to analyze by themselves; (c) Create Learning Community or Learning in Groups. It will help student to improve their leadership and their corporation among the students. The students discuss the material with their friends and they present it in front of the class; (d) Questioning as a learning tool. It is useful for improving students' curiosity. The teacher allows the students to ask something related to the material after discussion and presentation session finished; (e) Do more reflection in the end of learning to make the student feel that they have learned something. Provide enough time to reflect, analyze and respect all ideas that are expressed by all students. The teacher needs to engage the students in searching the information that can be applied in solving the problem in their own life. So, the learning gives them benefits in their life.

Based on the explanations of CTL characteristics above, it can be concluded that CTL really bring the students to real-life situation to reach their knowledge. Because the students can understand about the material well, if they see and learn from what is close with them.

METHODOLOGY

The design of this research was experimental research. The researcher wanted to figure out the effect of using Contextual Teaching and Learning strategy in teaching writing. The treatment was given for eight meetings. It is supported by Gay and Airaisian (2000:369), they propose that some periods of time are required for treatment.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

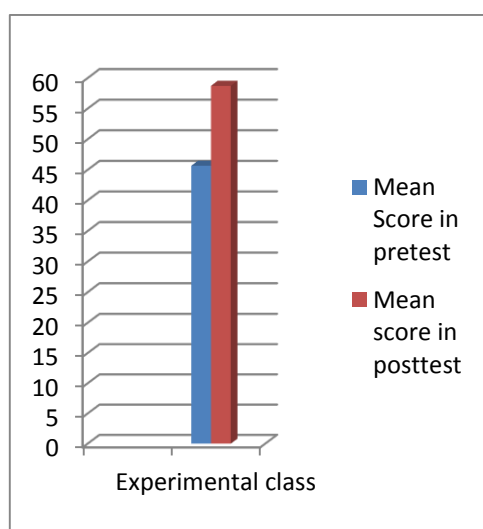
The research was carried out for eight meetings where one week consisted of two meetings. Contextual teaching and Learning Strategy was used by the researcher in teaching writing to students of VIII.8, as experimental class. Some activities were planned based on the provided schedule toward the process of teaching learning in the classroom.

The researcher observed students activities during the teaching learning process of writing. Try out writing test was held before pretest and posttest in order to get the interesting and easy topics on students' level and preference. The real test as the instrument of this research was limited for 90 minutes.

The researcher used t-test formula to find out the effect of using Contextual Teaching and Learning strategy toward students' writing ability. The data collected had been analyzed carefully by applying t-test. First, the researcher found out the mean score and standard deviation (S). It was found that the mean score of pretest was 45.66. On the other hand, the mean score of posttest was 58,72.

For more clearly, the data could be described in the following chart and table:

Table 1. Description of the result of research



Based on the data showed in the table above, there was different between mean score in pretset and posttest. After calculating the data by using t- test, the researcher found out that the result of t-test was 3.089.

Hypothesis Testing

Gay and Airasian (2000:473) explain that hypothesis testing is a process of making result of the study. The hypothesis of this reserach was using Contextual Teaching and Learning strategy gave significance effect toward students' writing ability. Hypothesis will be accepted if $t_{\text{calculated}}$ was higher than t_{table} .

Based on the data analysis, the result of the $t_{\text{calculated}}$ value was 3.089 and it is higher than value of t_{table} 2.052 at the degree of freedom (29-2) and the level of significant (0.05). It can be concluded that the hypothesis of this research (H_1) was statiscally accepted. In short, Contextual Teaching and learning strategy gave significant effect toward students' writing ability.

Table 2. Findings

Class	Total Stude nts	Mean score		t-test	
		Preste st	Posttes t	t- calculated	t- table
Experime ntal class	29	45.6 6	58.72	3.089	2.0 52

CONCLUSION

In writing, the students are not only required to write some words for their writing, but also they have to understand about their writing deeply. The researcher used Contextual Teaching and Learning Strategy as strategy that was applied in teaching writing at class VIII of SMPN 31 Padang. This strategy was used to help the students in learning writing and improved students' ability. Contextual Teaching and Learning Strategy is a strategy of teaching and learning that helps the teachers to relate object matter content to the real situation. This strategy requires the students to learn from their

personal experience in their life. Based on the data analysis, it was found that Contextual Teaching and Learning strategy gave significant effect toward students' writing ability.

SUGGESTION

It is really hoped that students at SMPN 31 Padang can be enjoy in learning writing. They can have more time to practice writing. The teachers are suggested to use various strategies in teaching writing in order to encourage and motivate the students to write. In addition, it is hoped that the students want to improve their knowledge about writing. For English teachers, they may use Contextual Teaching and Learning strategy for teaching writing, because this strategy can improve students' ability in writing.

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