ENHANCING STUDENTS' CREATIVE WRITING SKILL THROUGH ENGLISH COMMUNITY

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Abstract: The objective of this research is to describe the improvement of vocational higher students' writing skill through creative writing in English Community. The subjects were English Community members who took English for Specific Purposes (ESP) class (AM B) in current academic year. This was a quantitative research in which the data were collected through students' postings on instagram. There were 28 writings in each cycle scored using Jacob's scoring writing. The result showed that there was enhancement of students' writing skill from cycle I, II, and III. Writing through English Community made the students able to improve their English writing skill. However, among 5 writing scoring categories, the writer found that some students have difficulties in language use, vocabulary and mechanics but not for content and organization.
Keywords: Creative Writing, English Community

Abstrak: Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menjelaskan mengenai peningkatan kemampuan menulis mahasiswa vokasi melalui menulis kreatif pada Komunitas Bahasa Inggris. Subjek penelitian ini adalah anggota dari Komunitas Bahasa Inggris yang mengambil mata kuliah English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (AM B). Penelitian ini bersifat kuantitatif dimana data dikumpulkan melalui postingan mahasiswa di instagram Komunitas Bahasa Inggris. Terdapat 28 tulisan mahasiswa pada setiap siklus yang dinilai menggunakan teori Jacob. Hasil penelitian memperlihatkan adanya peningkatan kemampuan menulis mahasiswa dari siklus pertama, kedua hingga ketiga melalui English community. Dari lima kategori penilaian, penulis menemukan bahwa mahasiswa kesulitan dalam hal: penggunaan bahasa, kosakata dan mekanisme tulisan tetapi tidak pada pengembangan dan penyusunan konten tulisan.
Kata Kunci: Menulis Kreatif, Komunitas Bahasa Inggris

A.Introduction

Writing is one subject studied in Management Business Faculty, at Managerial Accounting Program in Institut Politeknik Negeri Batam. That is because the faculty realize that competency of writing has a big influence to the growth of other skills; speaking, listening and reading (Harmer, 2004). The lecturers designed a good concept in studying English where the students should be able to write many kinds of texts in various methods especially for business writing. As a productive skill, writing needs more practices than theory but the lecturers found several problems such as the lack of class time and the large number of the students. So that, Management Business Faculty creates English Community in order to improve students' English skill. This extra class was held every Saturday. The class was designed to build up a new learning environment because the students can explore ideas freely outside the routine classroom schedule. The concepts of creative writing also gave a new atmosphere for them. In English Community students were asked to update in media social such as writing English sentences in capture which made them more enthusiasm in using English without time and class limitation.

They do not only write formal writing but also informal writing such as diary, delivering information and self-healing. Creative writing is a chance to explore imagination by free writing. Through creative writing, students can use their language capabilities to go deeper and further in developing their ideas that they are hardly to do it in oral expression. They can express more personal thoughts and mental images. Therefore, creative writing tasks are motivating both for L1 and L2 students. Writing is not only a cognitive aspect but it also

mentally aspect. To write something people need to gain information and have experiences on the topic. So, in English Community the students can relate their daily life to the topic.

Creative writing is defined in various ways. "Creative writing has two propositions: involves a set of activities, or process, that can be discovered by the investigation of disseminated works and creative writing involves personal and social activities with the intention of producing art and communication" (Harper, 2010). Self-expression, and all social engagement can be object in creative writing. As also mention: "Writing as a public art is one way of being unequivocal about the place of writing in a people landscape. However, writing does not need books, monuments or sculptures to be a community. Publishing houses, academies and literary festivals are the circuit, a kind of literary three-ring circus. There, the audience is already created, and they largely get what they want – even if what they want is to be challenged. But creative writing thrives in many open spaces, and new writers are often to be found in less visible spaces in which writing thrives just as openly, if less famously (Smith, 2005). Shortly, creative writing is kind of productive skill that expresses ideas and thought in an imaginative way. Freedom that is a key point of creative writing so that writer can create some spaces include public libraries, schools, community groups, reading groups, prisons, hospitals, nursing homes, refugee centers, adult education groups, some workplaces and, expanding exponentially, cyberspace. Writers have even found themselves playing their art in shopping malls, and teaching their discipline while on public transport or on mountain summits (Smith, 2005). At this point, college have created an English community as a space for students to explore their English competence.

Many researchers have conducted research of writing. Tok and Kandemir had done research about effects of creative writing activities on students' achievement in writing, writing dispositions and attitude to English. Based on the experiment, the researcher concluded that creative writing activity brought a positive improvement in students' writing (Tok & Kandemir, 2015). Munawar also did the research about improving speaking skill through the learning community technique. The students' speaking increased after doing some class action (Munawar, 2015). Zulfiqar also did the same research but he held it through Facebook because learning writing through Facebook encourage students' skill (Zulfiqar, 2014). These researches focus on writing skill as writer do but differ in approaches used.

Pentury et al (2020) also conducted research on the ability to improve the skills of 21st century students through the creative writing project as one of the renewals in English learning. The educational model was quite challenging students to improve their writing skills. This research was carried out by observing creative writing tasks from students at Jakarta Indraprasta PGRI University. Researchers use qualitative methods with the creative integrity approach from 4C which are used to analyze the elements of creative writing in their creative writing tasks. The results showed that students had actually developed 4C skills which were also referred to as the 21st century skills through their creative writing tasks.

The writers were interested to observe the effect of this English Community. And if this community can be implemented effectively and can improve the students' English skill especially writing, it will be applied continuously in the faculty. Hopefully, it can be best practices for vocational higher school students especially in Institut Politeknik Negeri Batam and be a solution regarded to the large number of students and the lack of class time.

B. Research Method

This research was quantitative research by using classroom action research design. Quantitative research concerns on the collection and analyses of numerical data to describe, predict, and explain the data (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2000). And classroom action research is a type of research done by the teacher in his/ her own class in order to solve the problem happened in teaching and learning (Cresswell, 2014). Classroom action research is conducted by the teachers or the instructors using systematic procedure to discover the problems in their classes regarding to the teaching and learning and then try to improve it by planning the action and using the action in teaching until they gain the improvement on their students' achievement.

Kemmis and Nixon (2013) explain that there are 4 steps in the design of classroom action research and they are held in several recursive cycles as shown in figure 1. Each cycle starts from planning of the action, then implementing the action in classroom, observing the result and doing reflection in order to analyze the data gained during the implementation. Then next cycle is done based on the improvement gained from the reflection in the previous cycle.
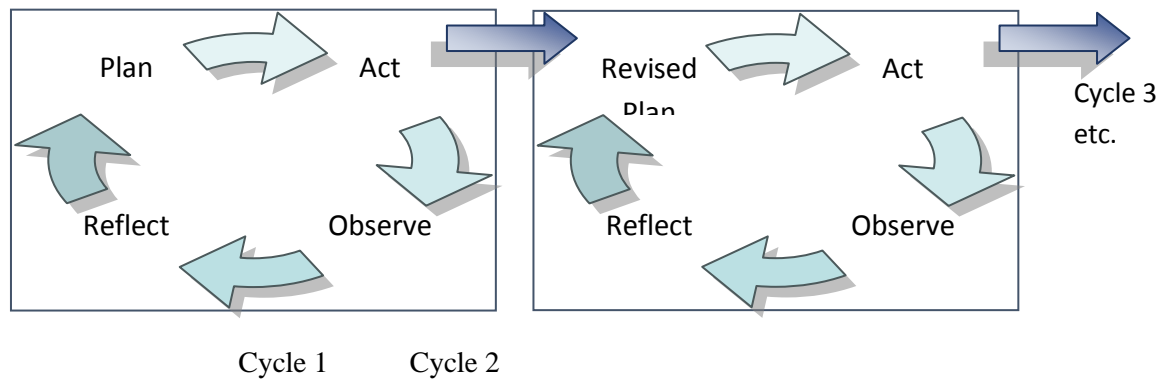

Cycle 1   Cycle 2

Figure 1. Cycle of Action Research (Kemmis and Nixon, 2013)

This research tried to find out whether there was improvement of students' writing skill looked from the students' writing scores. The data were gained from the students' writing on Instagram. There were 28 students as sample. To see the students' improvement, the writer did the research in 3 cycles (cycle 1, 2, 3). The students were asked to write about their idea on Instagram. While in analyzing the data, the researchers counted the percentage of students' writing competency by using Jacob's scoring. It was analyzed by this pattern:

$$P = f / n \times 100 \%$$

Note: P = percentage
f = frequency,
n = total of respondent

In presenting the analyses of data the writers used table and description. The writing components which were observed by researchers were:

1. Content

In writing assessment, how the writer tells the ideas is really important to analyze. There are many techniques can be used such us developing ideas through experiences, illustrations, facts, opinions; use of description, cause and effect, comparison, and consistency of focus. Therefore, the students were given the topic to be elaborated into some sentences.

2. Organization

In organizing the ideas, the researchers observed how effective the students in organizing their paragraphs: introduction, explanation (supporting sentence) and conclusion. The logical and chronological order of ideas, coherence and cohesion were also noticed.

3. Vocabulary

Vocabulary is related to diction; the choosing of word. Some students often misuse the word in their text. English has many synonyms; it must be used based on the context of the sentence.

4. Language Use

In English writing, grammar is one of the important components. It deals with the English structure, rules and tenses. The text will be read smoothly if it is grammatically correct in its composition.

5. Mechanics

Mechanics is also one of components needed in writing. It deals with spelling, punctuation, reference citation if any, neatness, appearance.

The ESL composition profile proposed by Jacob et. all. (1981) can be seen in figure 2.

SCORE	LEVEL	CRITERIA
CONTENT	30-27	**EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD:** knowledgeable, substantive, thorough development of ideas, relevant to assigned topic
	26-22	**GOOD TO AVERAGE:** some knowledge of subject, adequate range, limited development of ideas, mostly relevant to topic, but lacks detail
	21-17	**FAIR TO POOR:** limited knowledge of subject, little substance, inadequate development of ideas
	16-13	**VERY POOR:** does not show knowledge of subject, non-substantive, not pertinent, or not enough to evaluate
ORGANIZATION	20-18	**EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD:** fluent expression, ideas clearly stated/supported, succinct, well-organized, logical sequencing, cohesive
	17-14	**GOOD TO AVERAGE:** somewhat choppy, loosely organized but main ideas stand out, limited support, logical but incomplete sequencing
	13-10	**FAIR TO POOR:** non-fluent, ideas confused or disconnected, lacks logical sequencing and development
	9-7	**VERY POOR:** does not communicate, no organization, not enough to evaluate
VOCABULARY	20-18	**EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD:** sophisticated range, effective word/idiom choice and usage, word form mastery, appropriate register
	17-14	**GOOD TO AVERAGE:** adequate range, occasional errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage but meaning not obscured
	13-10	**FAIR TO POOR:** limited range, frequent errors of word/idiom, choice, usage, meaning confused or obscured
	9-7	**VERY POOR:** essentially translation, little knowledge of English vocabulary
LANGUAGE USE	25-22	**EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD:** effective complex constructions, few errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, preposition
	21-18	**GOOD TO AVERAGE:** effective but simple construction, minor problems in complex constructions, several errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, preposition but meaning seldom obscured
	17-11	**FAIR TO POOR:** major problems in simple/complex constructions, frequent errors of negation, agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, preposition and/or fragment, run-ons, deletions, meaning confused or obscured.
	10-5	**VERY POOR:** virtually no mastery of sentence construction rules, dominated by errors, does not communicate, or not enough to evaluate
MECHANICS	5	**EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD:** demonstrate mastery of convention, few errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing
	4	**GOOD TO AVERAGE:** occasional errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing but meaning not obscured
	3	**FAIR TO POOR:** frequent errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, poor handwriting, meaning confused or obscured
	2	**VERY POOR:** no mastery of conventions, dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, handwriting illegible, or not enough to evaluate

Figure 2. The ESL composition profile (Jacob et. All, 1981)

C.Finding and Discussion
1.English Community
    English community established on 25 January 2020. There are three core members of the English Community consists of the chairman, secretary, and admin, and for the rest of the members are all students of business management study program except the accounting. Students' activities in English Community are: 1) the students make a group maximum five people then they make a video of the conversation. Finally, they upload it on YouTube or Instagram of the English community and do it once a month. 2) The students post a random picture on Instagram and make a caption by writing English paragraph. They must tag the English community Instagram before they post it and do once every week. The goal of English Community is to add extensive knowledge and skills in speaking and writing using English in all activities because many of the students only learn English during an English course. Through this community, it is expected that all the students could compete with the International Class Program in management business where they will use English for all learning activities both in writing and speaking.
2.English Writing's Improvement through English Community
    The researchers did three cycles in doing this research in which each cycle started from planning the course, then implementing the action, observing the result and doing reflection. The schedule is shown in table 1.

Table 1: Research Cycles

	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
July	████		
August		████	
September			████

Table 1 showed three cycles used in writing's assessment. The process of collecting data was started at July 2022 as the first cycle in writing then continued to August 2022 as the second cycle and September 2022 as the last cycle. In this process, researchers asked the students to write the story then post it on Instagram of English Community. To measure their improvement, the researchers asked them to write the same topic in cycle 1, 2 and 3. After that the researchers gave the feedback to them even based on the sentence - structure or the grammatical error.

Cycle I

Table 2 shows the students' writing score for each component of writing in cycle 1.

Table 2: Students' Writing Scoring at Cycle 1

No	Category	Content		Organization		Vocabulary		Language Use		Mechanics	
1	Excellent	0	0%	2	7,1%	1	3,5%	2	7,1%	1	3,5%
2	Good	10	35,7%	8	28,5%	9	32,1%	8	28,5%	10	35,7%
3	Fair	13	46,4%	10	35,7%	13	42,8%	8	28,5%	14	50%
4	Poor	5	17,8%	8	28,5%	5	17,8%	10	35,7%	3	10,7%
		28	100%	28	100%	28	100%	28	100%	28	100%

In the first cycle, respondents were asked to write in English Community Instagram about their daily activity. Most of the respondents had fair score in writing. For content, none of respondents got excellent but some of them got excellent score in other components. There were 7,1% students got excellent for organizing ideas, 3,5% students were excellent for vocabulary, 17,8% got excellent score for language use and 3,5% were excellent for mechanics. In good category there were 35,7% respondents good in content, 28,5% respondents good in organization, 32,1% respondents good in vocabulary, 28,5% respondents good in language use and 35,7% respondents good in mechanics. Meanwhile when we see in fair category, there were 46,4% of respondents fair in content, 35,7% fair in organization, 42,8% fair in vocabulary, 28,5% fair in language use and 50% fair in mechanic. While, for poor category, there were 17,8% respondents poor in content, 28,5% poor in organization, 17,8% poor in vocabulary, 35,7% poor in language use and 10,7% poor in mechanics. From this table, we can conclude that most students got fair for content, organization, language use and mechanic. It can be concluded that in the first cycle, the students' ability level was still in fair category. The result of this cycle was used by the lecturers to revise the reinforcement in planning the second cycle.

Cycle II

This activity was conducted on August 2022. The respondents asked to write different topic from cycle 1 and then posted it in English Community Instagram. The result of cycle II will be presented in table 3.

Table 3: Students' Writing Score at Cycle II

No	Category	Content		Organization		Vocabulary		Language Use		Mechanics	
1	Excellent	3	10,7%	2	7,1%	5	17,8%	4	14,2%	7	25%
2	Good	11	39,2%	10	35,7%	12	42,8%	10	35,7%	6	21,4%
3	Fair	11	39,2%	14	50%	8	28,5%	8	28,5%	10	35,7%
4	Poor	3	10,7%	2	7,1%	5	17,8%	6	21,4%	5	17,8%
		28	100%	28	100%	28	100%	28	100%	28	100%

Table 3 shows the students' scores in every level of writing. The writing competence of students increased, only a few of them got very poor in each component. For excellent category, there were 10,7% respondents were excellent in content. If it is compared with the score in the first cycle, there was improvement on this category from 0% in first cycle to 10,7% in the second cycle. However, there were 7,1% participants were excellent in organization and this percentage was still the same as the first cycle. In vocabulary component, there was an increasing number of respondents which were excellent from 3,5% in the first cycle to 17,8% in second cycle. In the second cycle, 14,2% respondents were excellent in language use and this was increase compared with the first cycle which was only 7,1%. And in mechanics there was high improvement from 3,5% excellent in the first cycle to 25 % excellent in the second cycle.

While in good category, the score also showed an improvement. In content there were small increasing from 35% respondents which were good in first cycle to 39,2% in the second cycle. And 35,7% respondents were good in organization which means the percentage raised from 28,5% in the first cycle. In vocabulary component, 42,8% respondents were good and it increased about 10% from the first cycle. Then, 35,7% respondents were good in language use where in the first cycle it was only 28,5%. Nevertheless, the respondents who were good in mechanics decreased from 35,7% in the first cycle to 21,4% in the second cycle. The lecturers gave more attention to this component for the reinforcement.

For fair category, there were 39,2% respondents were fair in content, 50% respondents were fair in organization, 28,5% respondents were fair in vocabulary, 28,5% respondents were fair in language use and 35,7% respondents were fair in mechanic. Then the percentage of students who got poor category generally lessened in each component. There were only 10,7% respondents were poor in content and it reduced from 17,8% in the first cycle. And 7,1% respondents were poor in organization and it was better than in the first cycle which reached 28,5%. Even though the percentage of respondents who got poor in vocabulary was the same as the first cycle, 17,8%, but the number of respondents who was poor in language use went down from 35,7% in the first cycle to 21,4% in the second cycle. And 17,8% respondents were poor in mechanic component. In sum, most of respondents received good score in each category in the second cycle. From the data, it can be seen the improvement of students' writing competence compared with the first cycle.

Cycle III

This activity was conducted in September. The respondents were asked to write different topic from cycle 1 then posted it in English Community Instagram. The result of cycle III is presented in table 4 below.

Table 4: Students' writing score at cycle III

No	Category	Content		Organization		Vocabulary		Language Use		Mechanics	
1	Excellent	4	14,2%	5	17,6%	6	21,4%	6	21,4%	7	25%
2	Good	18	64,3%	17	60,7%	13	46,4%	15	53,5%	10	35,7%
3	Fair	6	21,4%	6	21,4%	6	21,4%	5	17,6%	8	28,5%
4	Poor	-	-	-	-	2	7,1%	3	10,7%	3	10,7%
		28	100%	28	100%	28	100%	28	100%	28	100%

Table 4 shows the result of writing score in cycle III. Most of respondent had good category in writing. However, 14,2% respondents got excellent for content. Then 17,6% respondents were excellent for organization, 21,4% respondents were excellent for vocabulary, 21,4% respondents were excellent for language use and 25 % respondents were excellent for mechanics. Then in good category there were 63,4% good for content, 60,7% good for organization, 46,4% good for vocabulary, 53,5% good for language use and 35,7% good for mechanics. For fair category, 21,4% respondents were fair for content, 21,4% respondents

were fair for organization, 21,4% respondents were fair for vocabulary, 17,6% respondents were fair for language use and 28,5% respondents were fair for mechanics. Then for poor category, there were 7,1% poor for vocabulary, 10,7% poor for language use and 10,7% poor for mechanic component meanwhile none of them was poor for content and organization. From that explanation it can be concluded that the respondent's level of writing's competence was good and increase compared with the cycle II and cycle I.

D.Conclusion

Based on the research which had been done by the researchers in cycle I, II and III, it was found that there was an improvement of students' writing skill through English community. English community had potential to assist students' English language acquisition through incidental learning. These three cycles presented us that vocabulary, language use and mechanics were common error done by respondents. The students needed "a place" in exercising and improving their English. English Community was needed for facilitating it. This improvement was enabled because the students had a free place to write their ideas so they wrote it without being limited by time and class. Then the frequency of writing also gave big influence in their writing. The more they write, the more capable they were in writing. This research hopefully will be one of strategies which can be used by English lecturers in Politeknik Negeri Batam. The strategy can give new atmosphere for the students and increase their creativity in writing. This research can be developed with the other relevant topics such as: developing the module, method and strategy. The writers hopes that this research can give contributions to all readers especially for Politeknik Negeri Batam.

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