

UTILIZING SNOWBALL FIGHTING STRATEGY TO PROMOTE STAFFS' CREATIVE THINKING IN WRITING RECOUNT TEXT

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Abstract

Writing is one of English productive skills which is considered difficult for new writers to start writing and being creative in sharing ideas into written form. Snowball fighting in writing is a strategy which can trigger them initiating ideas and thinking creatively to share ideas in writing recount text. The procedure in snowball fighting is divided into several steps: the students are asked to write a starter sentence about their past experience, then it is continued by the next students who get the paper thrown by the previous ones to write the next event creatively according to their own ideas but still coherent with the preceded sentences. This strategy was conducted to teach the staffs of Science and Technology Department in Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University, Malang in English Class Training Program for Staffs. Furthermore, this strategy created staffs' enthusiasm in writing, increased their writing speed of their ideas, developed staffs' creative thinking based on their ideas and improved their recount text writing.

Key words: Snowball fighting, creative thinking, recount text.

INTRODUCTION

Writing is the most complicated skill compared to other four skills, even for native speakers. The basic problem of writing is to find and explore the right ideas. Generating ideas is crucial to the success of any writing but seldom given attention by the writers (Rohman in McDonald et. al, 2009: 7). That is why teachers need an appropriate method to stimulate the students' ideas based on their knowledge and age. Furthermore, the reasons why writing is difficult as stated by Byrne (1984) are at least three causal factors of the difficulties. The first problem is linguistic problems which means the problems due to the use of standard language and writing convention, the second problem is psychological problems which is the problems that are related to the fact that writing is a solitary activity in which the writer has to write his/her own without the interference or the benefit of feedback in the middle of writing activity, and the last problem is cognitive problems, it is the problems due to the need to comprehend the text and certain structures which are less used in speech, or even not used at all, but they are important for effective communication in writing.

Writing holds the key role to develop the students' thoughts and ideas. Writing could be a powerful instrument of thinking because it provides students with a way of gaining control over their thoughts. This is because when the students try to write about their ideas, they also start to think about how to deliver their ideas to the readers (Gere, 1985:3). Most teachers know that writing begins with good thinking, which is why writing also could be called as a creative process (Garrison, 1957).

In order to know the ability of the students in writing, teachers must get them to write (Gere, 1985: 16). But it is not as easy as it seems because writing is the most complicated skill compared to other four skills, even for native speakers. The first basic problem of writing is to find and explore the right ideas. Generating ideas is crucial to the success of any writing but attention to this activity is merely given by the writers (Rohman in McDonald et. al, 2009: 7). The second difficulty is the lack of motivation for the students to write related to the strategy implemented by the lecturers. The third reason why writing becomes hard is because of the lack of time to write since the writing stages are needed before the students complete the text. The last one is the difficulty to find appropriate media in writing which can engage the students' participation in learning.

The things make writing difficult above may be influenced by teacher's conventional teaching writing strategy. The conventional writing activities to students can lead to their becoming amotivated (Fry, Ketteridge, and Marshall, 2003) because they were distracted of the classroom instruction and learning activities which are not sufficiently reinforcing to hold their attention (Wright, 2012: 7). Students easily got bored to the same strategy and demanded the new strategy in order to make them perform better in the result of writing.

The obstacles explained above, especially related to the students motivation, were appeared in the English training program for staffs in faculty of science and technology in UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. During the course process, in writing schedule, they tend to think deeply on what they would write with high worry to make mistakes. Sometimes, they tend to get bored because of passive learning atmosphere in which the staffs were asked to write their composition alone. That is why it is needed to apply teaching writing strategy that interest staffs to write. Also, one of the writing material was taught in the course was recount text which was also important to train the staffs in order to retell past experience or event in the university, especially in their faculty.

To increase the students' interest to write, they need a strategy which can influence and improve their ability in writing to follow the sequence, to write in a proper grammatical order, to avoid plagiarism, pay attention to punctuation, mechanics, and the genre. Another way to motivate the students is by giving materials which enable the students to write effectively because they need something to write about and they need to know how to generate and draft ideas which then can encourage writing (Hyland, 2003: 101-105). It means that the teacher should provide the teaching strategy that motivates students to generate ideas and to compose the sequential event in the story. One strategy is allegedly capable of learning create a conducive learning situation; active, creative, and fun is using the method of "throwing snowballs strategy". (Herdian, 2009).

Snowball throwing is a method which makes students enjoying and can decrease worry in learning writing. It encourages creative thinking. Students can increase their speaking ability by using a new language and being motivated students for learning. Snowball throwing encourages the students' active writing performance in the classroom, because this method contains a rich written communication where students must be active. Snowball throwing also has capability to increase self-confidence of hesitant students,

because in snowball throwing activities. This research wants to observe of English teaching learning process at senior high school.

There are many aspects in the teaching a foreign language, the teacher should have enough knowledge of that language in order that he or she can be the sample for his or her student. The teacher should therefore be competent at the language and the school facilities should support the process of teaching and learning. Herdian (2009) says that In the snowball throwing technique, teachers strive to provide the opportunity for students to develop the skills content of news or information to conclude that they received in the context of real and complex situations. Teachers also provide experience to students through integrated learning using processes that are related in a natural communication situation and the context of social, scientific, social and environmental matter. Through the principles of the use of such language, pragmatic approach to improving active learning in the learning infer the news content is expected to bring students into the situation and the context of real language study concluded that increasing the activity of the news content can rub off on students as something that is rational, cognitive, emotional, and affective.

The procedures of the snowball fighting strategy (Barrera : 2007) are :

1. Ask students to make snowballs by crumpling up their papers when they are done writing. (Be prepared for surprised looks and assure them that it is okay to crumple!)
2. Ask students to toss their snowballs across the room on the count of three.
3. Make sure that everyone catches a new snowball. (Occasionally, they will roll under chairs or get into the corners of the room)
4. Tell everyone to unfold the snowballs and , going around the room, ask them to take turns reading aloud the written responses in front of them. Encourage them to listen for common themes or interesting responses
5. As students read responses, take your own notes on the responses so that you can gain a sense of students' engagement with the topic. Your notes will provide a springboard to guide discussion later

This strategy as aforementioned will promote students' creative thinking. While creative thinking itself , in the context of studying at university, creative thinking is about applying imagination to finding a solution to your learning task (Cotrell in Coughland: 2007). Having listened to the audio clip, you will now understand that creativity is much more than the preserve of great artists, musicians, designers and inventors. In other words it does not take a 'special' kind of person to arrive at innovative ways of seeing and thinking. Creative thinking embodies a relaxed, open, playful approach and is less ordered, structured and predictable than critical thinking. Therefore it also requires some risk-taking as there is a chance that you will make 'mistakes' or not come up with an answer at all. You need to be prepared to cope with the resultant risk, confusion and disorder. If you are generally ordered and organized this may take some getting used to. Creative thinking skills are as much about attitude and self-confidence as about talent.

In conclusion, by considering the possibility of suitability and effectiveness of the snowball fighting strategy, the researcher conducted an Action Research using that strategy to solve the problems of the staffs of Science and Technology Faculty in Maulana Malik

Ibrahim State Islamic University, Malang in English Training program in improving their creative thinking in writing recount text.

METHOD

The study was conducted in Faculty of Science and Technology in Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University, Malang which is located on Jl. Gajayana 50 Malang. The subjects were the staffs in Science and Technology Department that joining the English Training program for staff in 2015; there were 14 participants.

The research design used in this research was Action Research of snowball fighting strategy since the researcher implemented it to solve the staffs' lack on creative thinking problems to achieve better writing composition and timing. In this research, the researcher applied collaborative Action Research which focused only on a particular classroom. Collaboration was done with another English Training program teacher who was also teaching the program too. The researcher herself acted as the practitioner who conducted the teaching and learning activities by using the snowball fighting strategy, whereas the collaborator performed as the observer during the implementation of the action. Also, both researcher and collaborator became the students writing evaluator based on the rubric provided.

The Action Research consists of cycle (s) in which each cycle consists of four stages namely planning, implementation, observation, and reflection (Latief, 2010: 86-88). However, to know what should be planned in the stage of planning, the researcher did a preliminary study to identify the students' problem. The preliminary study was in the form of test. In this study, the Criteria of Success emphasized on the students' creative thinking achievement that was proven by more creative composed recount text story in the same time like in the preliminary test, and the students' responses (opinion) towards the implementation of the strategy in the English Training program.

In implementation, staffs were asked to apply snowball fighting strategy. In the process of observation, in the first cycle, lecturer or researcher observed the students recount writing submission as the progress of learning. The last step, which was reflection, the lecturer evaluated the success of the applied strategy whether students had achieved the criteria of success or not.

DISCUSSION

The result of preliminary study explained that only few students in classes achieve above 60 score as describe in the following chart.

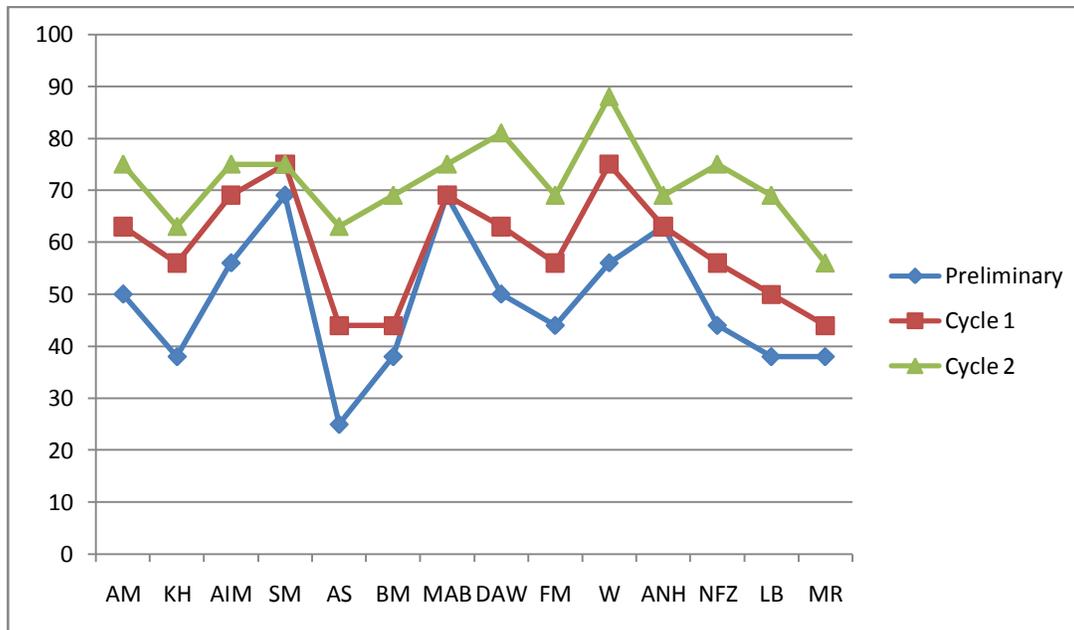


Chart 1 The Staffs' Scores in Preliminary Study, Cycle 1, and Cycle 2

The chart explained that staffs' problem was about meeting the minimum score to pass the writing rubric requirement. To achieve the consolidating level of recount writing, at least the staff should meet 63 score. While the chart shows only three among fourteen staffs met it. It means that the majority of their writing composition did not meet the requirement. It also shows that the staffs made composition that needed to be developed more.

After the staffs had snowball fighting strategy in the second meeting, the recount text writing scores as appeared in the chart shows increasing. Almost all staffs had increased scores except two of them, they are ANH and MAB. Though they had the same score as in preliminary test, but their scores met the minimum scores of consolidated recount text composition that is 63. Some other staffs had increasing scores with various range. Based on the recount text composition they had made, the researcher and evaluator saw that the staffs wrote more contents or longer composition in 30 minutes than before in preliminary test. It may be caused by their writing skill that have been trained by the snowball fighting strategy to continue friends story by adding one or more sentences in the story in two minutes. Unfortunately, still around seven staffs were still under the required score. Based on short interview with some of them, the limited time and generating ideas in short time were the most influential problems in writing recount text composition.

The test result in the cycle one became the preliminary test for cycle 2. As can be seen from the chart, 13 staffs among 14 staffs had increasing scores. Moreover, only one of them had score lower than the required score. The interview with the staffs mentioned that staffs had been accustomed to deliver their ideas in the form of recount text composition in short duration since the teacher had trained them using snowball fighting strategy that also made them motivated by the fun writing atmosphere. All staffs enjoyed throwing the ball and writing the next story after reading the previous sentences made by friends.

The average comparison from the preliminary test to the average score in cycle 2 shows that there was increasing from 48.4 to 59.1 in cycle, and 71.6 in cycle 2. The result of the test strengthen the use of snowball fighting strategy to improve the staffs' recount text writing strategy in English training program in faculty of science and technology, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.

CONCLUSION

Based on the attempt to solve staffs' problem to improve staffs' creative thinking, the conclusions are as follows:

1. This strategy created staffs' enthusiasm in writing, increased their writing speed of their ideas, developed staffs' creative thinking based on their ideas and improved their recount text writing
2. It removes anxiety of expressing ideas because of creating staffs' single composition that should be perfect.

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