

Improving Students' Writing Skill Using Instagram in Grade X of Science 5 at SMAN 5 Yogyakarta

Irfan Zidny

Suharso

Zidny94@gmail.com

Abstract: The aim of this research was to improve the students' writing skill using Instagram in Grade X of Science 5 at SMAN 5. This was an action research study which involved some steps. Those were reconnaissance, planning, action, observation, and reflection. The subjects were 28 students of Grade X of Science 5 at SMAN 5 Yogyakarta. The research was done in two cycles and obtained the qualitative and quantitative data. The data collection instruments were observation checklists, interview guidelines, and writing tests. The data were in the form of field notes, interview transcripts, observation checklists, and scores. The qualitative data were analyzed by assembling the data, coding the data, comparing the data, building meanings and interpretations, and reporting the outcomes. Then, evaluating students' writing products using the scoring rubric was done to get the quantitative data. The study showed that the use of Instagram in the teaching and learning process significantly improved the students' writing skill. The students made a good improvement on the aspects of content, vocabulary, organization, grammar, and mechanics. The social medium worked well to improve their interest, focus, and proficiency in writing. They were more interested in the teaching and learning process and kept focused on the class. They also had more opportunities to practice their skill using the social medium. There were significant improvements in the test scores. In conclusion, the use of Instagram can improve the students' writing skill significantly.

Keywords: Instagram, writing skill, teaching media

=====

Introduction

In the academic field in Indonesia, English is one of the six compulsory subjects for high school students as stated in National Education Minister's Regulation No. 46 Year 2010. Because of the requirement to pass the English subject, the senior high school students are expected to master the four language skills in a certain mastery level. One of the main language skills is writing. It is the last step in acquiring language after listening, speaking, and reading. Because it is the last step in acquiring language, it is the most difficult skill compared to the other main language skills (Khan & Bontha, 2014; Richards & Renandya, 2002).

Since the senior high school students have to master the writing skill, they have to be able to produce texts in the written form. But unfortunately, most of them have difficulties in writing the texts correctly. Their low interest in learning writing, less practice, difficulty in getting ideas, low grammar mastery, low vocabulary, teaching method, the role of media and many more aspects are some problems

they face in writing. Those problems cause them to make some mistakes in producing written texts. Of course it becomes a problem when they cannot produce written texts correctly.

On the other hand, the students often produce many texts on social media such as Instagram. They can freely express their ideas accompanied by pictures via the social media. Of course they do it by themselves. They do it for fun without being asked. The fact that almost all of them have their own smartphones makes them easily express their ideas through the social media.

Considering those conditions, a solution to use Instagram as the media to improve the writing skill of the Grade X students of Science 5 at SMAN 5 Yogyakarta was offered. Some previous studies show that the use of social media can improve students' writing skill. Those are Rifki Irawan (2015) who conducted an Action Research to improve English writing skill through Facebook Group in SMP 1 Pleret, Arum Wahyuningsih (2011) who conducted an Action Research to improve English writing skill through picture media in SMK N 1 Tempel, and Ru-Chu Shih (2011) who did research related to social medium and the writing skill at a technological university in Taiwan. There are several reasons of choosing the social medium to improve the students' writing skill. First, the students and the teachers can easily access the Internet everywhere and anytime. The second reason is the availability of the smartphones. The third reason is that Instagram was the most popular social medium used by the students of SMAN 5 Yogyakarta. Next, the fourth reason is that the social medium focuses on photography. When using the social medium, the students can only post on the media when they have at least a picture or photo. Therefore, they can use the picture to help them in writing on the media. This idea is supported by Harmer's statement (2004) that picture can help them develops their creativity in doing writing. As a result, their problems in getting ideas can be reduced. Effectiveness and efficiency are the next reason. By using the media, they do not need paper as their worksheets. The teacher can use the media to present the materials and the tasks. Then, they can also use the media to submit their answers directly and quickly. Once they have submitted their answers, he or she can discuss the answers through the media displayed by an LCD projector. The effectiveness and the efficiency of the use of the social medium is not only occurred in the classroom. By using the media, he or she can ask their students to practice their writing skill at home and monitor them through the media.

Research Method

This research study is classified as a classroom action research study which was aimed at improving students' writing skill using Instagram in Grade X of Science 5 at SMA N 5 Yogyakarta. The subjects were 28 students of Grade X of Science 5 at SMAN 5 Yogyakarta. To do the research, the researcher referred to the four phases in conducting action research stated by Kemmis and Mc Taggart in Burns (2010) with a modification by adding a reconnaissance step as the first step. As a result, the whole steps were reconnaissance, planning, action, observation, and

reflection. The research was done in two cycles in a month from March to April 2017 and obtained the qualitative and quantitative data.

The data collection instruments were observation checklists, interview guidelines, and writing tests. Observation checklists and notes were used to observe the researcher's activities and the students' activities. This kind of instrument was important for the observer as a guidance when the collaborator was doing observation. Using this instrument, the columns provided were checked based on the real condition. There were also some columns for notes when needed to add some information related to the condition. The result of this instrument was qualitative data. Then, the interview guidelines was used as guidance in interviewing the teacher and some of the students. When interviewing, a camera and a video recorder were employed as extra instruments to help the data collecting activity were also used. To know the result of the action implemented, Pre-Test, Progress-Test and Post-Test were done. Therefore, the students were tested three times. After that, their products were analyzed and compared between the tests. To analyze their products, scoring rubric was needed. The scoring rubric guided the researcher and the collaborator in analyzing the products so that the result was in a form of quantitative data.

The data were in the form of field notes, interview transcripts, observation checklists, and scores. The qualitative data were analyzed by assembling the data, coding the data, comparing the data, building meanings and interpretations, and reporting the outcomes. To analyze the quantitative data, Repeated-Measures ANOVA was used to know the difference between the scores of the three tests (Larson-Hall, 2010). To make the data collected valid, Anderson et al. in Burns (1999) propose five criteria that have to be achieved for qualitative data in Action Research. They are democratic validity, outcome validity, process validity, catalytic validity, and dialogic validity. For the quantitative data, inter-rater reliability was used to test whether the test is consistent and dependable (Brown, 2004). The score results of the assessments were analyzed using Pearson's product-moment correlation that provided the relationship between the two variables (Huck: 2012; Ho, 2014). To test the validity of data collected, content validity was used. This kind of validity can be done by having expert judgment to compare the test and the syllabus, core competence, or basic competence used (Huck, 2012). When there were some items that were irrelevant, those were eliminated.

Research Findings

The first step is reconnaissance. In this step, an interview with the English teacher about his teaching method and the problem faced by him in teaching English were done. The students' responses and problems in teaching-learning activity were also the topic of the interview. The interview transcript below shows some of the problems on the field.

R: "Commonly, what method do you use in teaching writing?"

T: **“Commonly, I just give the students a short explanation. Then, I ask them to practice.** I did it because, in my opinion, the focus of teaching the ten graders is for increasing their speaking skill first. So, the allocation for the speaking and listening skills are bigger than that for the reading and writing skills. So, when it is the time for descriptive text, I asked the students to describe something orally in front of the class first. After that, we moved to the written product.”

R: “When you are teaching writing, what difficulties that you commonly face?”

T: **“So far, the difficulty is on the students’ interest. They are lazy when they are asked to write.”**

R: “For the students, what difficulties do they commonly face?”

T: **“It is tenses, Fan. They are still confused in using tenses.”**

R: “Now, let us talk about teaching media. What media do you commonly use to teach writing?”

T: “I just use the board and the LCD projector, Fan.”

R: “What about using social media? Have you ever used it?”

T: “Not yet, Fan.”

Interview 1

After that, the teaching and learning activity performed by the teacher was observed. Then, an interview with some of the students was done to enrich the information on the problem identification. To support the data, the students’ works that were done when their teacher asked them to were used as a Pre-Test. The mean score result of the Pre-Test was 68.26. From the field problems, some of the problems based on the urgency and the researcher’s ability were chosen. Therefore, the students’ low interest, improper teaching method, less opportunity to practice, low vocabulary, difficulty in getting idea, low grammar mastery, and not maximized teaching media were chosen to be solved.

After getting the data of the problems on the field, a plan was made to solve those problems. In this plan, the researcher designed two meetings for Cycle 1. Those two meetings covered all of the 5 steps of the Genre Based Approach. The Approach was chosen in order to overcome the improper teaching method, students’ low vocabulary, students’ low grammar mastery, and less opportunity to practice. Then, Instagram was chosen to overcome the teaching media problem, students’ difficulty in getting idea and students’ low interest.

When the plan had been made, the action was implemented. The first meeting was on March 17th, 2017 and meeting 2 was held on March 24th, 2017. When the

actions were implemented, the students seemed enthusiastic and focus on the teaching and learning process. They also shouted happily when they knew that they would use Instagram as a learning medium.

P also told the students that in the teaching and learning activity, Instagram will be used as media. "In my research, I will use Instagram in teaching English," said P. "Yeeeyy" shouted them happily.

FN.1

After the implementation of Cycle 1, some interviews with some students and with the English teacher were done to know the effect of the action implemented. Based on the interview and the observation checklist given to the teacher, it can be seen that the media worked well to attract students' interest.

R : "What did you feel when I taught you? Did you feel bored, fun, happy, or anything?"

S2 : "I was happy because commonly I should write using pen. So, when I used Instagram, it makes me happy. It was relaxed while I was learning."

Interview 2

Then, the students were tested to write as Progress-Test to know the effect of the implementation. The mean score result of the test was 84.6. Then, the plan that had been made was modified based on the result of the Progress-Test. The modified plan was implemented on Cycle 2.

Cycle 2 also consisted of two meetings. The first meeting was done on March 31st, 2017 and the second meeting was done on April 7th, 2017. After the last meeting had been done, some interviews to some of the students were done to know the effect of the action implemented. Based on the interviews, it can be concluded that the social medium worked well to improve their interest and writing skill.

R : "I want to ask you about what I have done in your class. First, when I taught, what do you think about the way I taught? Was it already effective? Or..."

S3 : "Yes, mas. It was fun, too. Because we used smartphone. So, it was utilized."

R : "Really? So, it was better. Is not it?"

S3 : "Yes, mas"

R : "What did you feel and what did you see on your friends when I was teaching? Did they seem bored, neutral, happy, or anything?"

S3 : “It was neutral. But I never saw my friends seemed bored yet, mas.”

R : “Really?”

S3 : “Yes, mas.”

R : “Then, what about you?”

S3 : “It was fun, mas.”

R : “Really? Ok. Now let us move to Instagram. Based on your opinion, so far, does Instagram can be used to learn writing?”

S3 : “Yes, it improves our writing skill, mas”

R : “Really? So it helps in learning writing. Is not it?”

S3 : “Yes, mas”

Interview 3

Then, the students’ writings were evaluated using a Post-Test. The mean score was 87.69.

Findings and Discussion

According to the interviews, observation, and the evaluation of the students’ writings, it seems that the actions implemented in this research could improve their writing skill. It was proven that the use of Instagram can help them in developing their creativity in writing. It was because they can use some pictures through the media in writing the texts. According to Harmer (2004), picture can help students develop students’ creativity in doing writing. The use of Instagram is supported by Hyland (2004) that the new technology on ICT can affect the writing process, quality, and many other components of writing. On the other side, the media could also attract the students’ interest to learn writing. It is in line with the findings of the research conducted by Irawan (2015) that social medium can make a lesson become more interesting and more attractive. Moreover, by using the media, the lesson became more effective since the students did not need paper to submit their works. They just needed to touch their smartphones and then their teacher would get their works. In discussing the students’ works, Instagram is also good as media to show the works. Therefore, the use of Instagram can make the lesson become more effective and efficient in terms of time, energy, and equipment. As a result, the students’ writing skill could be improved well.

The success of the actions could also be seen from the mean score of the Pre-Test and the Post-Test. The mean score was improved from 68.26 to 87.69. Besides the improvement of the mean score, the proficiency was more homogenous. On the Pre-Test, the students’ standard deviation value was only 21.24. Then, on the Post-Test, it improved to be 5.18. The success of the actions can also be seen from

the analysis using Repeated Measures ANOVA. The analysis showed that the means of the Pre-Test, the Progress-Test, and the Post-Test scores were significantly different, indicated by $F(1.121, 23.539) = 11.581$, with $P < 0.05$. Moreover, the post-hoc tests using the Bonferroni correction showed that the use of Instagram improved the students' mean scores from the Pre-Test to the Progress-Test (from 70.56 to 83.75) which is statistically significant ($p = 0.031$). Then, the Bonferroni correction also showed that there was an improvement on their mean scores from the Progress-Test to the Post-Test (from 83.75 to 88.06) which is statistically significant ($p = 0.011$). Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of Instagram elicits a statistical improvement on the students' writing skill.

Conclusions

Based on the data obtained on the field, the problems were students' low interest in learning writing, less practice, their difficulty in getting ideas, low grammar mastery, low vocabulary, teaching method, and the role of media. In implementing the planned actions, the material and the tasks that were designed using Genre Based Approach were provided through Instagram. After all of the actions had been implemented, any information related to the effect of the implementation was collected. From the information, it could be seen that the actions were successful to improve the students' writing skill. It was proven by the mean score of the Pre-Test and the Post-Test that were analyzed using Repeated-Measures ANOVA. The analysis showed that there are significance improvements after the actions were implemented to the students.

References

- Brown, H. D. (2000). *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. New York: Longman Publishing Group.
- Brown, H. D. (2004). *Language Assessment: Principles and Classroom Practices*. California: Longman.
- Burns, A. (1999). *Collaborative Action Research for English Language Teachers*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Burns, A. (2010). *Doing Action Research in English Language Teaching: A Guide for Practitioners*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge.
- Harmer, J. (2004). *How to Teach Writing*. Harlow, United Kingdom: Pearson Education Limited.
- Ho, R. (2014). *Handbook of Univariate and Multivariate Data Analysis with IBM SPSS*. New York: CRC Press.

- Huck, S. W. (2012). *Reading Statistics and Research*. Boston: Pearson.
- Hyland, K. (2004). *Second Language Writing*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Irawan, R. (2015). *Improving the Writing Learning Process of Grade Viii Students of SMP N 1 Pleret through Facebook Group in the Academic Year of 2014/2015 (Unpublished Undergraduate Thesis)*. Yogyakarta: Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, FBS UNY.
- Khan, K., & Bontha, U. R. (2014). How Blending Process and Product Approaches to Teaching Writing Helps EFL Learners: A Case Study. *Methodologies for Effective Writing Instruction in EFL and ESL Classrooms*, 94-114.
- Larson-Hall, J. (2010). *A Guide to Doing Statistics in Second Language Research Using SPSS*. New York: Routledge.
- Richards, J. C., & Renandya, W. A. (2002). *Methodology In Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Shih, R.-C. (2011). Can Web 2.0 technology assist college students in learning English writing? Integrating Facebook and peer assessment with blended learning. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology* vol. 27, 829 - 845.
- Spratt, M., Pulverness, A., & Williams, M. (2005). *The Teaching Knowledge Test Course*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wahyuningsih, A. (2011). *Improving Students' Writing Skill through Picture Media in Grade X of Office Administration 2 of SMK Negeri 1 Tempel (Unpublished Undergraduate Thesis)*. Yogyakarta: Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, FBS UNY.