

Improving the Writing Skills of the 8th Grade Students of SMP Hamong Putera Ngaglik through the use of Dictogloss Technique in the Academic Year of 2014/2015

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Abstract: The objective of this research was to improve the students' writing skill of the second year of SMP Hamong Putera Ngaglik using dictogloss technique. This research involved the English teacher and the students of Grade VIII A in the academic year of 2014/2015. The data were collected through observation and interview. The research instruments were interview and observation guidelines. The data were in the form of field notes, interview transcripts, and pictures. The data were analyzed by coding them, eliminating the unneeded data, and presenting them into the research finding. In this research, some actions were implemented: (1) using pictures as media in the beginning of the lesson, (2) conducting dictogloss activity, (3) conducting group discussion, and (4) using English classroom. The research was conducted in two cycles of the actions. The result of the first cycle showed that the implementation of the actions did not reach the maximum result in improving the writing skill. There were some aspects that still need some improvements. The result of the second cycle showed that the implementation of the actions could improve the sentence arrangement in writing a descriptive text. The indicators of the success of the implementation of the actions were: (1) the increase of students' involvement, motivation, and confidence during the teaching and learning process, and (2) the improvement of students' writing skill after using the dictogloss technique.

Keywords: *dictogloss, writing, action research*

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Introduction

English becomes the most widely used language in the world. There are many people communicating in English. Crystal states that English is now the dominant or official language in over sixty countries and it is represented in every continent (1997: 106). From this fact, it can be understood that the English language is a vital means of communication for many people around the world. During the twentieth century, numerous technological inventions and developments, such as telephone, fax, electronic mail, internet, etc have facilitated communication among people and the language that is mostly used is English.

Talking about English itself, Indonesia is one of the countries using English as a foreign language. Usually, teenagers in Indonesia use English in their social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Teenagers, especially in junior high school level, often feel comfortable when they are using social media to express their ideas in English rather than to use this language in a writing class. In this case, teachers need to facilitate them to be more confident to express their ideas in the writing class.

In junior high school, English is one of the important subjects in the curriculum. The students need to pass English in their final examination. Based on the researcher's own experience when she was in her community service and teaching practice, many students had difficulties in learning English, especially in learning writing skill. They did not know what to write and how to write something in English. Most of them did not understand the process of writing in English. The students of English as a foreign language should understand the process of writing when they want to write an English text. It is important for them because when they want to write something, they must follow some processes in writing in English language.

The writing skill is the most difficult skill in English so that it might be hard for some students to be good in writing. They like to express their ideas by writing something in their mind into their books, and the rest prefer to tell their ideas. Those who prefer to tell rather than to write may have a good skill in speaking. On the other hand, those who prefer to write rather than to tell their ideas to another students may have the skill in writing. The differences of students' ability in learning the four skills in English language will lead them to the different achievement of the writing skill. The level of students' achievement is determined by some factors, such as teachers, teaching materials, environment, and teaching technique. If the teacher, teaching material, environment, and teaching technique do not improve students' ability and self confidence in learning writing, they will not be able to learn the writing skill.

There were some problems of teaching and learning the writing skill in SMP Hamong Putera. The biggest problem was that the teacher's teaching technique was less effective. This was the central problem because when a teacher did not have an effective technique in teaching writing skill, the students would feel less motivated and less confident in learning writing skill. This problem should be underlined by the teacher because the key to make the learning successful is to make the students confident and enjoy the lesson. The question to be answered through the research was how to improve the writing skill of the eighth grade students of SMP Hamong Putera Ngaglik in the 2014/2015 Academic Year by using the dictogloss technique.

Research Method

This study belonged to action research. According to Hopkins (1985: 32) and Ebbutt (1985: 156), action research is the combination of action and research renders in which a personal attempt is made to understand, improve and reform practice. It is usually a collaborative activity - involving input from the people who are likely to be affected by the research. To carry out action research, the

researcher used the following action research procedures suggested by Kemmis (Winter, 1982:12), such as Reconnaissance, Planning, Implementation, and Reflection. The researcher worked collaboratively with the other research members discussed some changes of the research that happened in the classroom.

The subject of the research were class VIII A students of SMP Hamong Putera Ngaglik of the 2014/2015 Academic Year, Sleman, Yogyakarta. The class consisted of 25 students. The research members consisted of the researcher, the English teacher and the students of Class VIII A.

The data were in the form of descriptions of opinions or ideas and the expectations of the research members. The instrument for collecting the data were writing test, the observation, and interview guides.

The collected data in this research were analyzed by coding them, eliminating the uncedeed data, and presenting them into the research finding. Miles and Huberman (1994) state some steps to analyze action research data of which most of the data are in form of words, sentences, phrases, and other expressions: (1) coding the data, (2) eliminating the data, (3) presenting the essential and supporting data in the research finding, and (4) drawing conclusions/verification.

Findings and Discussion

The first part of this research is the reconnaissance. In this part, the pre-test was done to identify the students' ability in writing skill. It was held to recognize the students' writing skills before the dictogloss technique was implemented. It was conducted on 1st of October 2014 and took 90 minutes. The test required the students to write a descriptive text individually. They were allowed to consult dictionaries. The students' descriptive texts were then assessed by using a rubric. In this stage, the English teacher of SMP Hamong Putera was also being interviewed to obtain the data of students' writing problems.

Cycle 1 was done on the 8th of October until the 22nd of October 2014, because in the middle of October 2014, SMP Hamong Putera conducted the mid semester test in one week, the researcher decided to take a break of the research during the mid test, and continued it after the mid semester test.

In the discussion, the research members, including the researcher and the English teacher made a discussion forum to talk about the results of the evaluation. They talked about the process in doing Cycle 1. The teacher and the researcher found that the material were a little bit difficult for the students. The teacher then asked the researcher to adopt an easier topic to be taught in the second cycle. Based on the evaluation, the researcher agreed to adapt an easier text with the familiar topic to make the students easier in learning the writing skill. The results of the evaluation were implemented in Cycle 2.

In Cycle 2, the researcher planned to improve the writing skill of grade eighth in SMP Hamong Putera using the easier and more familiar materials. In doing Cycle 2, the researcher also worked together with the English teacher to make the lesson plan and the materials. Before doing the research, the researcher made the lesson plan first, and then consulted it to the English teacher to gain the feedback. There were three meetings in this second cycle. The last meeting of Cycle 2 was the post-test. The English teacher and the researcher decided to make the second cycle into three meetings only.

Based on the second cycle, the students gave the good responses. They felt interested in learning English and found it easier in learning writing. One of them said that she felt comfortable and happy to study English in the new technique. Another student said that the materials were easier. He said that the materials were easier to understand. The English teacher also gave the positive response to this new technique.

Based on the results of the second cycle, the researcher found that the dictogloss technique can help students overcome the problems in learning the writing skill in the form of sentences and paragraphs arrangements. They felt more comfortable and active in joining the classroom activity. It also effected their results in writing. Based on the evaluation, it can be concluded that the students' writing skill increased in terms of sentences and paragraphs order. The students' vocabulary mastery were not highly increased. It is because of the students' low ability in learning vocabulary and the limitation of time for the research. To solve this problem, the researcher and the English teacher decided to give them more texts with new vocabularies. The English teacher and the researcher decided to implement dictogloss after the research to make the students' writing skill better.

Conclusions

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded four points; 1) The use of media such as pictures in the beginning of the lesson helped students focus on the topic and the researcher's explanation; 2) The use of dictogloss technique helped students concentrate to learn the writing skill; 3) The classroom interaction also increased during the use of the dictogloss technique; and 4) The students' mark relatively improved during the cycles. It can be seen from the students' mark.

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