



ENHANCING STUDENTS' CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION OF WRITTEN TEXTS THROUGH COOPERATIVE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

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Info Artikel

Sejarah Artikel:
Diterima April 2013
Disetujui Mei 2013
Dipublikasikan Juni 2013

Keywords:
Writing;
Content;
Organization;
Cooperative Learning

Abstrak

Siswa seringkali mengalami kesulitan dalam membuat karangan, khususnya dalam pengembangan isi dan sistematika penyusunan karangan. Penelitian ini berusaha memecahkan isu tersebut dengan melibatkan siswa di dalam berbagai kegiatan pembelajaran kooperatif. Dua siklus penelitian tindakan kelas telah diimplementasikan di ke kelas XI. Dua tipe text yang diajarkan kepada 26 siswa yakni report dan narrative. Data diperoleh dari jurnal harian guru, karangan sebelum siklus, dan karangan setelah siklus. Data kedua diperoleh dari kumpulan karya anak. Dengan menjelaskan data kualitatif dan kuantitatif, penelitian ini menjelaskan proses perubahan yang berkaitan dengan karangan. Dalam dua siklus tersebut kemampuan menulis siswa meningkat. Peningkatan di bidang isi ditunjukkan dengan peningkatan nilai dari taraf buruk ke taraf memuaskan. Isi tulisan siswa yang awalnya tidak tersusun dengan baik dan dengan ide terputus dapat berubah menjadi tulisan dengan ide yang jelas dilengkapi dengan informasi yang memadai. Peningkatan di bidang organisasi karangan meningkat dari buruk ke sangat baik. Awalnya karangan siswa tidak sistematis namun mereka berhasil meningkat ke karangan yang terstruktur dengan idea yang mengalir secara logis mengikuti pola karangan yang dianut. Peningkatan di bidang isi adalah 3.43 sedangkan peningkatan dalam organisasi karangan adalah 3.46.

Abstract

Students often have problems in writing, especially in developing contents and organizing ideas to write. The present study attempted to improve my students' contents and organization through engaging them in cooperative learning activities. Two cycles of an action research were implemented to the eleventh grade students. Two types of genre were taught: report and narrative. There were 26 students involved. The primary data were the teacher's daily journal, the students' pre-cycle writing, and the students' post-test writing. The secondary data were the students' artifacts. After two cycles of action research, the students gained improvement in their writing contents and organization. In the area of contents, the students improved from the level of fair to poor to excellent to very good. They were able to move from scratch and choppy writing to the level of writing with ideas clearly stated completed with knowledgeable information. In the area of organization, they were able to move from the level of fair to poor in which they were lacking of logical sequencing to the excellent level in which they were able to organize ideas in a logical order. The improvement in the area of content was 3.43 and the improvement in the area of text organization was 3.46.

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the language skills that requires not only grammatical knowledge but also contents and organization of ideas in producing good writing. To achieve good writing competence, both students and teachers should work together because writing is a process rather than product. Hedge (in McDonough & Shaw, 2003) argues that writing is recursive process, where we move from one stage to another several times, with a wide range of variation, and defines the process of writing into three categories: pre-writing, drafting and redrafting, and editing the pre-final version. Content involves any materials and ideas that are stated in the writing. It includes some knowledge about the topic, topic development, and details about the topic being written. In addition, with the writing organization, it commonly begins with a paragraph of introduction, followed by several paragraph explaining the details, and closed with a paragraph of conclusion. It should flow in sequence order.

Cooperative learning activities are defined as “a strategy in which small team, each with students of different levels of ability, use a variety of learning activities to improve their understanding of a subject” (Kagan, 1994: 2). The example of cooperative learning activities are jigsaw, think-pair-share, two head at once, pair discussion, and peer review, etc. In cooperative learning, each member of a team is responsible not only for learning what is taught but also for helping teammates to learn. With a support system before, during, and after the drafting process hopefully students will gain more confidence in writing, get more ideas to write, and be more critical of their writing as well as their partner’s writing.

Johnson and Johnson (2009) discuss five essential components of cooperative learning activities, those are: positive interdependence, individual accountability, promotive interaction, the appropriate use of social skill, and group processing. These five components will be beneficial to supports students learning process. Positive interdependence means that an individual will depend on other individuals in order to complete the same task (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Storch (2005), based on his study about collaborative writing in which students composed an essay together and produced a single text, discussed the benefit of collaborative writing in providing students an opportunity to give feedback for each other, which is building a sense of boundaries interdependence.

The second essential of cooperative learning is individual accountability. Johnson and

Johnson (2009) explained that individual accountability exists when the existence of an individual is valued and the individual’s results are given back to the individual and group to compare against a standard of performance. In a cooperative learning activity, each individual plays an active role in the learning process and he/she gains personal experience during the learning process.

The third essential component of cooperative learning activities is promotive interaction (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). It is defined as individual effort to encourage each group member to accomplish the group goals. In cooperative learning, the group goal is valued beyond individual goals. Interaction may be promoted through giving encouragement to a partner in writing buddy project (Hsu, 2009) and teaching knowledge to others, such as in a collaborative writing project (Storch, 2005).

Another benefit of cooperative learning is providing the appropriate use of social skills for L2 learning (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). It promotes student-student interaction through sharing ideas, discussing problems, and negotiating meaning (Storch, 2007; Wigglesworth & Storch, 2009). Students will learn skills to interact in their social life by playing an active role in the group discussion. The last component discussed by Johnson and Johnson (2009) is group processing. In cooperative learning, it is important to keep the activities as student-centered activities with the teacher as the facilitator so the students will gain more experience in solving problems, managing conflicts, and making decisions. Due to the various benefits of cooperative learning such as facilitating individual learning as well as group learning, this activity may be beneficial in helping students during the various stages in the writing process.

In secondary school, cooperative learning activities have been applied to teach English as well as content (Winarno & Widayati, 2006). Many teachers indicated positive support toward cooperative learning activities, but there are very limited studies that discuss the implementation of cooperative learning activities and the influence on student performance.

This study is meant to describe the problems faced by the students in writing reports and narratives, to describe the implementation of cooperative learning activities in enhancing students’ content and organization in their writing, and to examine the improvement of the students’ content and organization in their writing through cooperative learning activities.

METHODS

This study adopted an action research design from Kemmis and McTaggart (1988). There were two cycles with one genre for each cycle. Results from the first cycle determined the design of the next cycles. There were two teachers in the classroom: the researcher and a collaborative teacher. The researcher taught the class and the collaborative teacher helped her control the class, observe, and gather the data. In addition, the collaborative teacher was also an English teacher. The pre-cycle was conducted a month before starting the cycle of action research, by doing classroom observation for two meetings in an English classes. In addition, two pre-cycle tests were given during the observation. Furthermore, I have also analyzed the students' pre-cycle writing. Cycle I and II consisted of planning, acting, observing, and, reflecting.

The study was conducted in an English class in Nasima High School during the first semester from July 29th, 2012 to October 22nd, 2012. There were twenty six grade 11 students. Students were mixed between boys and girls and their English proficiency levels were diverse. The primary data was students' pre-cycle writing, students' post-tests, teacher's daily journal, and interview data. The secondary data was the student artifacts, such as students' drafts, mind maps, movie products, questionnaire, oral information from the video recording, and also the interpretation of the observation pictures. There were five methods in collecting the data : gathering student artifacts, writing teacher's journal, video recording, *gathering students test*, *interviewing the students*. Five method had been used to analyzed the data, those were : categorizing student artifacts, coding teacher's journal, interpreting video recorder, coding the interview script, scoring student pre-cycle writing and post- writing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data from the observation checklist, interview with the classroom English teacher, and the students' writings in the pre-cycle writing show that the students had problems in content development and organization.

Based on these problems, in the cycle I activities, a report text was taught as the first genre for Grade XI. A series of cooperative learning activities was given in teaching the report text. Those were pair and group discussions, Think-Pair-Share activity (TPS), jigsaw activity, peer-review, group mind-mapping, and group presen-

tations. The activity was started with teacher-led class discussion about the report text. The activity was followed by filling out a KWL chart (Know, Want, and Learn) in pairs. The next were the activity of pair discussions, writing the result of discussion, presenting the result in front of class, and asking for clarification were incorporated. The second activity started by dividing my students in some jigsaw groups. Every group got a report text and was asked to present the definition, social function, generic structure, and language features of the report text that they got.

In the next meeting, the students worked in pairs. Using the sources they brought, the students conducted Think-Pair-Share activities. After the sharing part, the students were assigned to choose one topic they were going to write. They were told to discuss and to create a mind map of the topic they agreed to write. Afterwards, the students were told to develop their mind map into a report text by writing collaboratively with their partners. The students submitted their first draft to be evaluated in the next meeting.

Peer-review came last in the writing process. After the peer-review, each pair got their paper back and was asked to revise their paper according to the evaluation rubric got. The last meeting was used for a post-test. The students were given a prompt and told to work individually. Their texts were submitted to be evaluated.

In the second cycle, the cooperative learning began with a class discussion about narrative stories and types of narrative stories. The activity was followed by students watching a narrative movie. Afterward, the students were grouped to analyze the definition, social function, language feature, and generic structure of the narrative movie that they had just watched. After all of the groups had completed the task, one of the groups presented their answer in front of the class. Upon knowing the structure and function of the narrative text, the students got an individual assignment to watch any narrative movie at home and summarized the story.

The next day in the class, the students were grouped according to the type of narrative story they summarized. The stories were shared in the groups and the best story was chosen by the group members. After choosing one story to be presented, each group got a project to create a narrative movie script of the story. The activity was followed by peer review. The movies were then to be presented in front of class. The presentations were followed by questions, critiques, and suggestions for each movie. The presenting group got input from the viewer groups, whereas

the viewer groups were responsible to evaluate the performing group. The activity was closed by a post-test. The students were given sixty minutes to draft, edit, and complete a narrative story based on the given prompt.

The students' improvement from the pre-cycle writing to the first cycle writing and the second cycle writing can be described as follows. The students content development in the pre-cycle writing were categorized as fair to poor with the indicator ideas somehow stated, limited knowledge about the subject, and limited development of topic. In the first cycle, the student gained some improvement to the level of good to average: ideas are stated with some knowledge about the subject, limited development of topic, relevant with the topic but less detail. In the second cycle, the student improved from the level good to average to the level excellent to very good with the indicator ideas clearly stated, knowledgeable, full development of topic, and relevant to the topic.

The students could demonstrate some improvement in the area of organization from pre-

cycle writing to cycle one writing and cycle two writing. In the pre-cycle writing the paper organization was in the level of fair to poor with the indicator lacks logical sequencing and development. In the cycle one writing the organization move to the level good to average with the indicator the students writing organization was logical but incomplete sequencing. Finally, in the cycle two writing, the students' organization improved to the level of excellent to very good with the indicator the organization is completed in logical order.

CONCLUSION

The use of cooperative learning was implemented in two cycles of the action research. Before the research, the students had problems in organizing ideas in their writing and contents of the reports and narratives. During the action research, students created a mind-map on what they were going to write. They developed their mind map into a report text. Each students got a review rubric. Each students review their partner's paper.

Table 1. The Improvement Process in the Students' Content

Activity	Learning process	Students' Improvement
Pair discussions	Students have a discussion about the writing topic. Students presenting the result in front of class Followed by class discussion.	Students become involved in the process of finding knowledge. Students got opportunity to gather ideas to write by writing the result of the discussion.
Think-Pair-Share	Student got a moment of silent to think of any ideas they are going to write. Students share their ideas with peers, listening to peers, and giving comments to each others. Students share their ideas in front of the class.	The students were able to practice stating their ideas and knowledge about the topic they were going to write. The students got new knowledge and ideas on what to write by listening to others.

Table 2. The Improvement Process in the Students' Organization

Activity	Learning Process	Students' Improvement
Mind mapping	Students create a mind-map on what they are going to write Students develop their mind map into a report text	The students were able to organized ideas and put it systematically in the mind map The students were able to transfer their mind map into a written text with a complete and sequence organization
Peer-review	Each students got a review rubric (see appendix 9) Each students review their partner's paper	The students were able to analyze a paper and decide whether the organization is complete or not The students internalize the knowledge and strategy of reviewing paper, especially in term of paper organization and hopefully will use this strategy to review their paper

Through this mind mapping activities, they were able to organize ideas and put them systematically in the mind map. They were able to transfer their mind map into a written text with a complete and sequence organization. They were able to analyze a paper and decide whether the organization is complete or not. They internalize the knowledge and strategy of reviewing paper, especially in term of paper organization and hopefully will use this strategy to review their paper. In summary, the cooperative learning activities can improve the students's ability in organizing texts and the quality of the contents of the report and narrative texts.

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