

DEVELOPING STUDENTS' SKILL IN SCRIPT WRITING FOR THEIR FINAL PROJECT BY APPLYING GUIDED WRITING TASK

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to develop students' skill in script writing as it was one of the obligations for final year students of English Department, State Polytechnic of Padang (PNP). A qualitative study which was based on the theory of writing task stages highlighted by the expert in this area was taken. The analysis itself was perceived by applying 'Guided Writing Task' stages; Draw and Write Task and Shared Task which resulted in a few written draft scripts. For the triangulation to validate the data, a list of the question was conveyed to the students. The implementation of these two tasks and the students' answer for the questionnaire show that this research has been helpful in improving their script writing skills, particularly on the grammar and organization of how a script should be written.

Keywords: student skill, script writing, guided writing task

INTRODUCTION

Since the year of 2009, State Polytechnic of Padang (PNP) has established an English Department which particularly focuses on two areas as the value-added point; English for Translation and English for Broadcasting. The subjects that are provided for the students from their 1st to 3rd semester mostly focus on parts of English language, like Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing, Public Speaking, Technical Writing, and others. Then starting from their 4th to 5th semester, they get additional subjects which discuss translation and broadcasting matters.

During this time of learning, writing takes the place of the least interesting subject to be learned. There is a common tendency within the students, particularly in Indonesia, to put aside reading and writing subjects as they require more effort than listening and speaking. Regardless, many schools have established 'Student-centered learning' despite some that still apply the 'Teacher-centered learning' where the students prefer passive forms of learning. Therefore, the reading and writing habits are not big in numbers within these students, notably academically. As a matter of fact, there is evidence that someone can learn to write after they have been reading and vice versa. It is because writing and reading implicate some of the similar sub-process (Lee & Schallert, 2016). The research shows that students who encounter learning difficulties in reading and writing due to some inabilities can still learn reading and writing, though at a slower pace than average students (Ates, Cetinkaya, & Yildirim, 2014).

It can be said that students practically only learn English as Foreign Language (EFL) in class for the confidence that they get from learning it in their own country. Learning a foreign language in the mother tongue (L1) speaker's environment with different background makes some learners face the rough time in applying it in their daily life. It means that the effectiveness of the learning process is difficult to be completed since the learners have varied circumstances and they still use their L1 outside

the class. For sure, this problem leads to their ability in writing skill as well. This phenomenon is challenging not only for the students but also for the lecturers in the English Department in PNP. Due to the requirements of the final project which should be fulfilled by the students, where they have to produce a product based on their interest in translation or broadcasting, writing is significantly needed. This skill is not only important for their report but also needed for their product. Likewise in broadcasting, the students should provide the report with a script as a part of the procedure that should be followed in making a good television or radio production (Fachruddin, 2014). It is not easy for them to write a script related to some problem which has been explained. They have difficulties in organizing the script well, which affect the result of their product or the production schedule.

Based on this problem, guided writing task is assumed to help the students, especially those who focus on the broadcasting area, in order for them to write the script well. It is in accordance with what Lan, Hung, and Hsu (2011) highlighted, that guided writing is one of the most effective factors which develop and formulate abstract ideas, or assumed as media, to assist the pre-writing process. By conducting the pre-writing strategy (Dujcik, 2008), the results that are found on the students writing quantity and quality demonstrated significant improvement. Besides, during the production process, they can gradually demonstrate the ability to understand and present concepts and ideas in much greater detail than they used to (Murray, 2012). Within the guided writing which consists of 'Draw and Write' and 'Shared Task', drawings can serve as both pre-assessment and post-assessment tools, and provide an important representation of a student's understanding (Chang, 2012).

In agreement with that, Chang and Sun (2012) have also stated that collaborative dialogues among students encourage them to actively and reflectively engage in knowledge sharing. Eventually, this knowledge sharing can improve the quality of students' final report which is based on vocational education and industrial necessity. Nation (2009) has stated that each learner has his/her strengths and weaknesses in language acquisition. Thus, they can work to their strength and build on their weaknesses by working together. In this respect, 'Shared Task' (Nation, 2009) has so much benefit for both weak and stronger students since they have their turn to be an 'expert' in this activity. Students who are orally stronger can strengthen their skill by helping those who are weaker in speaking elements such as pronunciation. In return, those who are grammatically stronger can do the similar thing with writing (Nation & Newton, 2009).

This research significantly aims at helping the students who produce the broadcasting product by writing a script in English. This is important to be solved since the English script written by these students have yet to fulfill the standard given. Meanwhile, this script is considered a significant point in broadcasting's final project for them. Therefore, this guided writing task method is assumed to be able to develop their abilities in writing a script and at the same time, affect the quality of their project as well. Besides, by referring to this method, the students are expected to improve their ability in writing, both for their report and script. In the end, it is an essential point to implement this method for the students of the English Department in PNP.

METHODS

This research uses the qualitative approach as it has been accepted widely and appropriate for the study of language acquisition which is conditioned by social, cultural, and situational factors (Dornyei, 2007). Obviously, this qualitative data can provide unique insights for a study (Mackey & Gass, 2005), and it can test the hypotheses derived from the qualitative work as well (McDonough & McDonough, 1997). The participants are two final year students who have interests in producing broadcasting for their final project. In the beginning, they have been asked for their conscience to

participate and told that they could withdraw at their convenience. This research is conducted for four months with the interval of one month for each script made.

Meanwhile, for the procedure, there are some steps utilized; (1) It is taken from the students' idea to be the theme of their project, discussions are made between them and the researchers. Here, they have also made some preparations for producing their project by conducting research and observation. (2) They start to produce the project by writing their first script draft for the broadcasting product based on the data obtained from the interview and shooting process. At this stage, they experience the 'Draw and Write' and 'Shared Task' process which consists of three stages of script drafts. 'Draw and Write' task is done as the first draft, then the students hand in their second draft to the researchers to be assessed. On the other hand, 'Shared Task' is conveyed for the second one. In a group of two, the students start talking about their script and picture. Here, this task aids them in conceptualizing their writing (linguistic factor) and how it can make them support each other by sharing ideas of learning to write (educational factor). The revision made for the first, and the second draft is taken from the feedback from both their partner and the researchers. (3) The final script is written and finalized. During this time, they also perceive open-ended questionnaire to be answered in order to enrich the data analysis made from the three drafts.

For the data collection, there are some steps conducted. In the beginning, the researcher and the students have discussed their final project. Then, the students follow every process of production based on what has been taught from their study on the related topic. After that, these students move on to the step of script writing process. In this process, the researchers begin collecting the data. First, there is their first draft of script referring to their knowledge during the production process. Finishing this draft, then, the next step is to proceed to the first step of the guided writing task; 'Draw and Write' task. After being introduced, they are asked to brainstorm the script that they have written by drawing all the ideas within the topic that they want to produce in their project. The drawing refers to the scenario that they have set previously in the pre-production and production processes. This task is aimed in order for them to revise their work based on the feedback given by the researcher. Following that, these students continue writing their second draft as the second data to be analyzed. In this process, the students receive the second treatment by using the second step of the method applied; 'Shared Task'. The data is taken from the script which has been shared and discussed by the students conducting the peer review. Then, the students write and submit the third draft to the researcher based on the revision made. Finally, the third data is obtained from the final script of these students which are based on the revision made on their third draft. During the process of writing their first, second, and third script draft, they are welcome to ask their teacher for the L2 translation, or they could use the dictionary for glossing instead. As they ask, the teacher then writes down the words on the paper so the researchers and the other students can also have the general understanding of those mentioned words. This final script is also the one that is used for the project.

Furthermore, as this is qualitative research, the data are also collected from the analysis of questionnaires' answers. The list of questions is related to the students' opinion about the effectiveness of the method for their final project. The questions are made to be easily understood by the students for them to answer with their prior knowledge. This questionnaire is considered relevant to the research and expected to qualify for proper criteria of good quality data. Thus, the researchers would put less effort to record and to evaluate the result.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

After this report is accomplished, some points could be underlined. First, based on the first draft of scriptwriting done by the students, the researchers still find several weaknesses related to the organization of the script and its grammar. Most of the errors found are on its arrangement, especially the composition

of its subtopics such as the lead, body, and its closing. Whereas to fulfill all the requirements of their product's script, they should write it down based on the theory learned (including its content and organization). Meanwhile, the error for the grammar is only minor as it is only about the use of tenses, whether it is in present or past tense.

This problem could be solved by the 'Draw and Write' task, especially the one related to the organization of the script. Here, the students are asked to draw pictures (mind map) related to the script that they want to tell in their project. They should describe the picture in their writing by referring to the production process. They are welcome to ask the researchers for their L2 translation or to use the dictionary. They are asked to write down some important words on the paper to support their script. The mind map drawn by the students can be seen in Figure 1 and Figure 2.

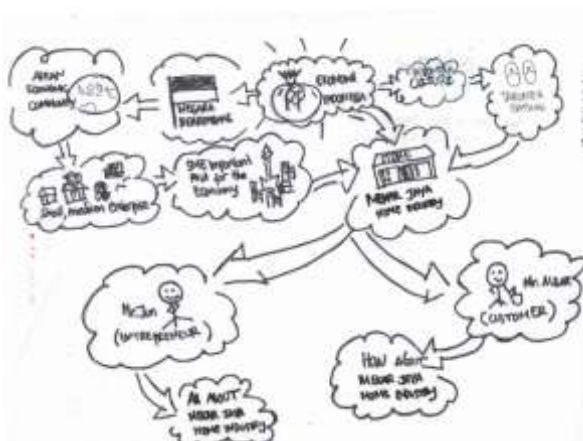


Figure 1 Amel's Mind Mapping (Participant 1)

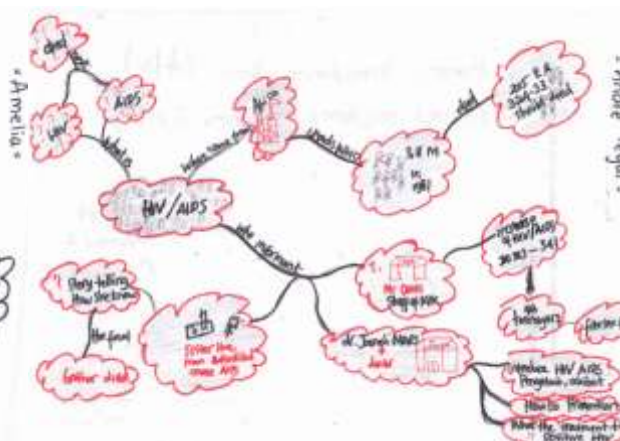


Figure 2 Andre's Mind Mapping (Participant 2)

This stage is fun since they have created the flow of the script by using pictures. It is related to what has been stated by Nation (2009) that the students can use the picture as a media to recall their idea and guidance in the writing process. Furthermore, by suggesting activities that challenge or extend their ideas, the teachers can find out what their students are thinking (Woodward, 2009). Woodward (2009) has also highlighted that these designed motivating tasks can show what learners already know and do not know. Through the map, students can explore their knowledge about their project. The student can write if they provide their writing with the good topic and well-organized idea (Nation, 2009). Both students think that this picture can be one of the preparations that they can use to produce a good script. In the draw and write process, the students are able to elaborate the ideas concerning their script. This process is considered as the fun way for them to write their script. By having this mind map, they could share their thought in the radio production and make it understandable. It is described in their second draft which has fewer mistakes of grammar and more organized in terms of the idea.

Then through question and answer that is conveyed to these two students, in order to balance the data perceived from the whole process of scriptwriting, they also admit that they have difficulties in finding a proof-reader to discuss their script with. As discussed by Nation (2009), 'Shared Task' can conceptualize writing of the students (linguistic factor) and how it can make them support each other by sharing ideas of learning to write (educational factor). Sometimes students find difficulty in doing a task individually. Therefore, with the script and mind maps on their hand, they start talking about their script and picture by applying it. One student is a speaker and another is a listener. They take the turn in storytelling about the pictures drawn, and they are allowed to use words on the paper as their language support. The listener could ask the question and give suggestion to the speaker. The result of this question and answer method is shown in Figure 3.

Andre Tegor (1)

1. Did you write your script in English directly or write in Indonesian language then translate it into English? If so, what are your reason?

→ I wrote the script in Indonesian language before, then I translated into English, because it is so easier to be finish the script from the beginning till end, and after all it clear I can translated the script to English. If there is word that I don't know what is the meaning, then, I just used dictionary to find what is the meaning as well in printed or online dictionary.

2. Did you write draft in advance and reading it for revision needed? or did you use your first draft as your final draft? If so, what are your reason?

→ Yes, because I wrote draft before, then, I can find a proof reader and after that, if there is feedback from them, I can revision the draft to be better again, and I'm not used my first draft as my final draft.

3. Did you revise your first draft? what did you do? please explain deeply?

(2)

→ Yes, after I got the feedback from proof reader and then I checked my draft, if there is something wrong, I revised my first draft.

4. What are your difficulties in writing English script for your project? Explain deeply?

→ to make English script, I had some trouble or problems that is I cannot / I don't know to find the meaning the other word, and also I always repeated the same words.

5. What do you think about "Draw and Write task" that we did in your second draft revision? Do you think drawing a ^{mind} map is effective to explore your idea? why?

→ for me ^{draw} and write task are the steps to make me remember the topic. Drawing a mind map is effective I think, because I can remember the topic from the title or mind map and also to make easy to representation.

Figure 3 Question and Answer

Consequently, working in a pair and/or in a group (of three or four) might help them in composing a piece of writing. It is in the reason that even though the students have almost equal proficiency, there will be different aspects of learning that they acquire. It means that there will be the opportunity as well for each of them to work together and consider that the other's weakness will be the strength of another. Applying shared task to the students require little preparation from the teachers, and at the same time also lessen the workload of them in supervising and doing the marking. Needless to say, by conducting this task, it can support the students to see each other as the learning resource (Nation, 2009). Within this process, it could be seen that they have made some progress connected to the composition of the script and the use of grammar. They could place the interesting lead of the script and put the result of the interview in it.

Aside from that, there is feedback provided by the researchers in every stage of the task. Hence, this task consists of oral fluency development and negotiation of meaning because it guides and facilitates these students to focus on meaning. It is when they bring their experience and knowledge on the drawing (meaning-focused input), storytelling, and writing composition of their interest based on the picture that they have drawn (meaning-focused output), focus on the form of what they are writing (language-focused learning). Clearly, fluency development is fulfilled by repetitive activities of storytelling and writing up the composition that starts with the easy and familiar material (Nation, 2009). As they get some corrections and suggestions from the researchers and their friend on their work, they could upgrade the quality of their work based on the standard put for radio broadcasting's script.

By having feedback on their writings in the form of spoken and written, these students feel their works are appreciated as they realize that the teachers have read their works. It is in accordance with what Franken and Haslett (2002) have said that in the process of writing, the students as the writers require both guidance and feedback. The feedback they receive covers all aspects of their composing; on the ideas they have generated and organized (planning), on the text they have produced (translating), on their strategies for checking the text for content and errors (reviewing), and on their strategies for

repairing the texts (revising) (Franken & Haslett, 2002). The feedback given is usually both written and spoken in order to make sure that the students can grasp the idea of the feedback provided. Besides, it avoids the feedback being time-consuming as well, and the students can also learn from each other's mistake to motivate themselves more.

The oral feedback is given to the students after they have finished brainstorming their ideas and discussing what they will write about. An example is 'Your story reminds me of my experience' or 'This is an interesting story, I find it amusing'. It raises their self-confidence to continue their writing task since they know how well their ideas are so that they can engage more in their writing. Indeed, it is still important to give balanced feedback such as positive encouragement to write more after pointing out their errors in writing.

The teachers provide written feedback to the class for common weakness and strength of all students. The hand out of this written feedback consists of the best pieces of writing like common errors and weaknesses and what to do about them (Nation, 2009). The written feedback may also be in the form of comments on individual writing. Both of these written feedbacks would make the students more aware of their errors and the further step that they should take to improve their writing. In another word, it motivates the students to be successful writers. Written feedback like this tells the writer that their work is being read, is understood, and interest the reader (Nation, 2009). Overall, there would be a significant difference in their writing before and after they receive feedback. These feedbacks, when it is given carefully; a balance of feedback for errors and positive encouragement for their works, in such a way can motivate them to produce more writing (Nation, 2009). The feeling of being appreciated is a strength that a teacher can have to stimulate their students' to be actively engaged in the classroom. Furthermore, the students clearly need a partner and discussion session during script writing process. It helps them to get the idea and realize their fault which will lead to a better writing quality of the English Department's students (Nation, 2009).

Of all stages that have been conducted, this research has collected three drafts of scripts written by the students. From these drafts, it can be seen that these students have come up with a better understanding of writing a script based on the standard given in their study concerning the script composition and grammar. Particularly so on the mind mapping stage; the draw and write task, where they can express themselves clearly to the researchers and friends on the writing that they do. Hence, 'Shared Task' stage has been examined to be helpful for them to point out their partner's writing strengths and weaknesses through their script, and rectify some mistakes in the script. Clearly, it is indicated that the students enjoy all the stages provided by the researchers, referring to 'Question and Answer' stage deployed to both students as evaluation part. They come to an agreement that these guided writing task stages have helped them to finish the script writing process faster and improve the quality of their script into being well-organized. By having the partner and many discussion sessions, they can get feedback to elaborate their ideas related to the broadcasting script writing process and finally it improves their weakness, especially in grammar and script organization. By and large, it can be said that the guided writing task can develop the broadcasting students' scriptwriting skill in the English Department in PNP.

CONCLUSIONS

After managing this research and getting the result, it can be concluded that the required procedure and result have helped students to develop their skill in writing. First, 'Draw and Write' task help the students who find it difficult to explore and elaborate their idea in script writing process. They can organize the idea well by using a fun way which is mind map. Second, 'Shared' task is quite effective in revising the mistakes of the script since the students can get the suggestion from others since they have had problems in finding proof-reader in the past. Subsequently, it is to help the students in their learning process starting from gathering the material, organizing it, and presenting it in a piece of writing. For the reason that it can

focus on generalizing the topic types and stimulate the students' way of thinking as well as ideas to write. By implementing this task during the writing production, the students can have control over the content of their writing. Moreover, their difficulties in syntax and grammar will be greatly lessened as well. In the future, it is hoped that there will be continuation of this research by producing a guidance to help the student in producing their final project, especially in script writing. The research is limited to the student's script writing and their idea development in writing it.

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