

UPGRADING STUDENTS' WRITING PERFORMANCE THROUGH CONTEXTUAL TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROACH

Hafirah Patang¹
Iski Sulastri²

Universitas Cokroaminoto Palopo^{1,2}

ABSTRACT

This is a pre-experimental research using one group pre-test and pos-test design, which aims at finding out the effects of Contextual Teaching and Learning approach in improving students' ability in writing descriptive text at the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Sabbang. The population of this research is the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Sabbang. The total number of the population is 149 of the all eleventh students. The researcher took 20 students as the sample from one class by using cluster sampling technique. This research employed writing test as the instrument of data collection. The result of this test is used to assess to what extent Contextual Teaching and Learning approach can improve the students' ability in writing descriptive text. After several meetings, this research found out that the use of Contextual Teaching and Learning approach is significantly effective to improve the students' ability in writing descriptive text. It is supported by looking at the mean score obtained by students through pre-test is 51.55 and post-test is 76.86.

Keywords: upgrading, contextual teaching and learning approach, writing, descriptive text.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian pra-eksperimental menggunakan satu kelompok pre-test dan post-test yang bertujuan untuk mengetahui efek dari pembelajaran kontekstual untuk meningkatkan kemampuan siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif pada siswa kelas XI SMA Negeri 1 Sabbang. Populasi penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas XI SMA Negeri 1 Sabbang yang berjumlah 149 orang. Peneliti mengambil 20 siswa dari satu kelas menggunakan teknik klaster sampling. Penelitian ini menggunakan tes menulis sebagai instrumen pengumpulan data. Hasil tes ini digunakan untuk menilai sejauh mana pembelajaran kontekstual mampu meningkatkan kemampuan siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif. Setelah beberapa kali pertemuan, penelitian ini menemukan bahwa penerapan pembelajaran kontekstual secara signifikan efektif untuk meningkatkan kemampuan siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah nilai rata-rata yang diperoleh siswa melalui pre-test adalah 51,55 dan post-test adalah 76,86.

Kata-kata kunci: peningkatan, pembelajaran kontekstual, menulis, teks deskriptif, kemampuan siswa

A. INTRODUCTION

Contextual teaching and learning is an educational process that aims to help students see meaning in the academic material they are studying by connecting academic subjects with the context of their daily lives, that is, with context of their personal, social, and cultural circumstance (Jhonson, 2009).

According to Blanchard (2001), contextual teaching and learning strategies: (1) emphasize problem solving; (2) recognize the need for teaching and learning to occur in a variety of contexts such as home, community, and work sites; (3) teach students to monitor and direct their own learning so they become self-regulated learners; (4) anchor teaching in students' diverse life-contexts; (5) encourage students to learn from each other and together; and (6) employ authentic assessment. Here the researcher emphasizes on writing skill especially how to write descriptive text with good grammar and good organization or form. The researcher's observation in SMA Negeri 1 Sabbang pries to this script writing that gives the researcher an idea to apply contextual teaching and learning approach in teaching them writing descriptive text. Related to that point, the researcher formulates research questions as follows:

1. How is the students' ability in writing descriptive text before using contextual teaching learning approach?
2. How is the students' ability in writing descriptive text after using contextual teaching learning approach?

B. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

1. Writing

According to Gebhard (1996), writing is process of creating an idea and express the meaning in written-form. Another related sense proposed by Meyer (1999), writing is thinking of paper. Thinking is a mind at work, finding facts, seeing relationship, testing the truth of them, and researching conclusion. Danial (2007) states that writing is a system of more less permanent marks used represent an utterance in such a way that it can be recovered more or less exactly without the intervention the speaker. Bennet (2006) states that writing is thinking of paper, thinking is mind at work finding fact, seeing relationship, testing the truth of

them, reaching conclusion, forming opinions. In this way, our mind produces a huge variety of ideas and the facts that support them are the material which goes into any pieces of writing. In order senses, writing can be a way of expressing ideas smaller once that is the researcher uses words to make a composition.

There are a lot of reasons why writing is important. Some of them are stated by Heaton (1988) below:

- 1) Writing is a tool for discover, we stimulate our tough process by the act writing into information and image we have our unconscious mind.
- 2) Writing generates new ideas by helping us to make connection and relationship.
- 3) Writing helps us to organize our ideas. We can arrange them in coherent form.

The teaching of writing is directed to have a good result of writing. There are some characteristics of the good writing as Adelstein and Prival (1980) state as follows:

- 1) Good writing reflects the researchers' ability to use the appropriate voice. Even though all good writing conveys the sounds of someone talking else, the voice heard though the writing must also suit purpose and audience of the occasion.
- 2) Good writing reflects the researchers to organize the material into coherent whole so that it moves logically from a central, dominant idea to the supporting points and finally to a consistent ending, conveying to the reader sense of a well thought out plan.
- 3) Good writing reflects the researchers' ability to write clearly and unambiguously to use sentence structure, language, for example so that one possible meaning is the researchers' intended one.
- 4) Good writing reflects the researchers' ability to write the reader interest in the subject and to demonstrate a thought and sound understanding of it.
- 5) Good writing reflects the researchers' ability to citizens the first draft and receive it. Revision is the key of effective writing.
- 6) Good writing reflects the researchers' pride in the manuscript the willingness to spell and punctuate accurately and to check the meaning and the

grammatical relationship within the sentence before submitting the finished product to the structure of an audience.

- 7) Writing down ideas allows us to distance ourselves from them.
- 8) Writing helps us to absorb and process information when we write a topic, we learn it better.
- 9) Writing enables us to solve the problem by putting the elements of them into written form; we can examine and manipulate them.
- 10) Writing on a subject makes us active learners rather than passive learners of information.

2. Descriptive Text

Pardiyono (2007) states that a descriptive text is a text which lists the characteristics of something or someone and description is a mode of expository writing which is relied upon in other expository modes, we sometimes find difficulty in imagining a purely descriptive essay.

There are three characteristics of a purely descriptive essay which are worthy of remembering. They are:

- 1) A descriptive essay has one, clear dominant impression. If, for example you are describing a snowfall, it is important for you to decide and to let your reader know if it is threatening or lovely; in order to have one dominant impression it cannot be both. The dominant impression guides the author's selection of detail and is thereby made clear to the reader in the thesis sentence.
- 2) A descriptive essay can be objective or subjective, giving the author a wide choice of tone, diction and attitude. For instance, an objective description of one's dog would mention such facts as height, weight, colouring and so forth
- 3) A subjective description would include the above details, but would also stress the author's feeling toward the dog, as well as its personality and habits.
- 4) The purpose of a purely descriptive essay is to involve the reader enough so he or she can actually visualize the things being described. Therefore, it is important to use specific and concrete details.

3. Contextual Teaching and Learning Approach

Contextual teaching and learning is an educational process that aims to help students see meaning in the academic material they are studying by connecting academic subjects with the context of their daily lives, that is, with context of their personal, social, and cultural circumstance (Jhonson: 2009).

According to Depdiknas in Pardiyono (2008), there are five ways to apply contextual teaching and learning approach. They are:

1) **Constructivism Theory**

This theory is basic of fundamental thinking for CTL. The real knowledge for all students builds experience. In this case, the students have to be active in learning-teaching process, the students have to solve their problem, the students have to find out something used for them and the students have to have idea as well as to realise their recognition.

2) **Inquiry Finding**

Learning process finds process of steps or inquiry key involves (1) formulating the problem, (2) observing or doing observation like reading book, and (3) analysing the creative result in front of the teachers, friends and the audience.

3) **Questioning**

Questioning in contextual teaching and learning approach which involves (1) supporting students to find out something, (2) guiding the students to get information, (3) using to know the students' skill to think creativity, and (4) practicing the students to have critical thinking

4) **Learning Community**

The good result of learning is got from sharing with another person. Group is as well as the individual. Group at as well the person does not know yet: it is happened in all level as community in class, activity using approach or CTL the teaching is suggested to do learning in grouping.

5) **Modelling**

Modelling is very important in applying contextual teaching and learning approach. So, the modelling activities are (1) giving suggestion thoroughly, and (2) demonstrating how do the students want to learn. Therefore modelling

is learning skill or certain knowledge, any model can be designed with the students.

4. Hypothesis

- a. Ho: The use of contextual teaching and learning approach is not effective to improve the students' ability in writing descriptive text at the Eleventh grade of SMA Negeri 1 Sabbang.
- b. H1: The use of contextual teaching and learning approach is students' respond to improve the students' ability in writing descriptive text at the eleventh grade of SMA Negeri 1 Sabbang.

C. METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

This research applied pre-experimental method. It investigates students' ability in writing descriptive text through contextual teaching and learning approach at SMA Negeri 1 Sabbang in Academic Year 2014-2015.

This research used one group of pre-test- treatment- post-test design. It carried out pre-experimental method.



Figure 2. Research design

Where: O_1 = Pre-test
 X = Treatment
 O_2 = Post-test

(Gay, 1991: 225)

The population of this research is the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Sabbang. The total number of the population is 149. Considering the number of population is large enough, the researcher took 20 students as the sample from one class. The researcher used cluster sampling technique.

The independent variable for this research is contextual teaching and learning approach (X) and the dependent variable is writing descriptive text. The

researcher applied test of this research. The test consists of pre-test and post-test. The pre-test is administered before the treatment to get data on students' prior knowledge about writing descriptive text, while post-test is given after the last treatment to find out the students' ability in writing descriptive text after the treatments. The writing test was used to measure the students' ability in writing descriptive text.

Table 1. Rubric for writing assessment

No	Scoring Aspect	Score
1.	Content	
a.	If the central process, the unity, the coherence and the continuity of the composition are all correct.	17-20
b.	If the composition a few errors of the central purpose,the unity, the coherence,and the continuity.	14-16
c.	If the composition some errors of the central purpose,the unity, the coherence,and the continuity.	11-13
d.	If the composition dominant errors of the central purpose, the unity, the coherence, and the continuity.	8-10
e.	If the composition the central purpose, the unity, the coherence, and the continuity are all incorrect.	5-7
2.	Organization	
a.	If the words, sentence and paragraph line form are a clear pattern.	17-20
b.	If the composition contains a few errors of the word, sentence and paragraph in line form.	14-16
c.	If the composition contains some errors of the word, sentence and paragraph in line form.	11-13
d.	If the composition contains is dominated errors of the word, sentence and paragraph in line form.	8-10
e.	If the composition of the word, sentence and paragraph in line form are all incorrect.	5-7
3.	Grammar	
a.	If the grammar of the composition is all correct.	17-20
b.	If the composition contains a few errors of grammar.	14-16
c.	If the composition contains some errors of grammar	11-13
d.	If the compositions contains is dominated errors of grammar.	8-10
e.	If the grammar of the composition are all incorrect.	5-7
4.	Vocabulary	
a.	If the composition wide range of vocabularies and using effective words	17-20
b.	If the composition contains frequent errors of vocabularies but the meaning is not obscured.	14-16
c.	If the composition contains frequent errors of vocabularies but the meaning is not obscured.	11-13
d.	The use efficiency words and terms about theme are mostly incorrect.	8-10
e.	The use efficiency words and terms about theme are all incorrect.	5-7
5.	Mechanics	
a.	If the punctuation, spelling, and capitalization of the composition are all correct.	17-20
b.	If the composition contains a few errors of punctuation, spelling and capitalization.	14-16
c.	If the contains some errors of punctuation, spelling and capitalization.	11-13

d.	If the composition is dominated by errors of punctuation, spelling and capitalization.	8-10
e.	If the punctuation, spelling and capitalization of the composition are all incorrect.	5-7

(A modified version from Heaton (1988:14))

While in classifying the score of students, the research followed the following steps:

Table 2. Students' score classification

Scale	Classification
96 – 100	Excellent
86 – 95	Very Good
76 – 85	Good
66 – 75	Average
56 – 65	Fair
36 – 55	Poor
0 – 35	Very Poor

(Depdikbud,1996:3)

After classifying the score, the researcher calculates the mean score, and significant difference in pre-test and post-test of students' answer by using SPSS 20 application.

D. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

1. Findings

After conducting the test, the data was calculated and analysed to find out the result of the research. The findings of the reseach are presented below:

Table 3. The rate percentage of the students' scores of pre-test

No	Classification	Score	Frequency	Percentage %
1	Excellent	96-100	0	0
2	Very Good	86-95	0	0
3	Good	76-85	0	0
4	Average	66-75	1	8
5	Fair	56-65	3	12
6	Poor	35-55	16	80
7	Very Poor	0-35	0	0
Total			20	100

On the table 3, it can be seen the students pre-test result on all aspects, they are in content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanic. Some student get average, fair and poor category. One student (8%) categorizes as

average, 3 students (12%) categorize as fair and 16 students (80%) get poor category. No one student is categorized as excellent, very good, and good.

Table 4. The rate percentage of the students scores of post-test

No	Classification	Score	Frequency	Percentage %
1	Excellent	96-100	0	0
2	Very Good	86-95	2	10
3	Good	76-85	9	45
4	Average	66-75	8	40
5	Fair	56-65	1	5
6	Poor	35-55	0	0
7	Very Poor	0-35	0	0
Total			20	100

Table 4 shows the students' post-test result. Two (10%) students get very good category, 9 (45%) students categorize as good, 8 (40%) students categorize as average, 1 (5%) student categorizes as fair.

1. The mean score and standard deviation of the pre-test and post-test.

Table 5. The mean score and standard deviation of the pre-test and post-test

	Pre-test	Post-test
N	20	20
Mean	51.55	76.80

Based on the table 5, the mean score of pre-test is 51.55 and score of post-test is 76.80.

2. Test significant

Table 6. The probability value of T-Test

Variable	P-Value	N-1	(α)
X r Y	0.000	19	0.05

The table 6 indicates that the result of $p = 0.000$ while $\alpha = 0.05$. It could be concluded that α was higher than p . Therefore, the alternative hypothesis (H_1) was accepted and null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected. It means that the using of contextual teaching and learning approach is effective to improve the students' competence in writing descriptive text.

4.2 Discussion

Looking at the finding, the researcher presents the discussion of data of the students. The section presents the result of data analysis. It aims at describing the student's development in writing ability through contextual teaching and learning approach. Based on the result of data analysis, the researcher found out that

contextual teaching and learning approach can improve the students' ability in writing descriptive text to the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Sabbang.

The description of the data collected through writing test as explained in the previous section showed that the students' skill improved significantly. It was supported by the mean score rate of students' result in the pre-test and the post-test in writing descriptive text by theme " My Best Friend ". The data previous section showed that writing descriptive text by using contextual teaching and learning approach was effective to improve students writing. It was supported that the mean score of post-test is 76.80 while the mean score of pre-test is 51.55. It means that, the use of contextual teaching and learning approach in writing descriptive text gave a good effect for students' ability.

Another fact showed that the use of contextual teaching and learning approach gave a better effect and had contribution in writing descriptive text. It was proved by the students' score of each aspect or components in writing descriptive text was improved after having treatment. In pre-test, the students still face problem with the five criterias given in writing evaluation. In content, some students got problem since they have very limited vocabulary that make students difficult in write what their think into paper. In the pre-test, there were some weaknesses of the students in writing descriptive text such as in delivering their ideas in writing based on the theme. In pre test the students still difficult in stringing up word so the students difficult in developing their ideas about the theme. Besides that, many students still face problem with grammar and organization. Furthermore, some students low in using mechanic. This fact can be seen in the students' work as follow:

Student' writing in the pre-test. "*I have my friend he name muh Reza he is handsome and this is kind orang. I am happy berteman with Reza... he is no arrogan. He have color shine white little black and he is kind with me and he have hobby playing guitar. He stay in lagaligo*". The student still has problem related grammar and mechanic. The student do not use the mechanic and grammar truly. That example shows that the students' still find difficulties in writing. The example of students' writing improvement can be seen from the example of students' writing in the post-test: "*I have good friend, his name is Muh. Reza,*

reza is my classmate. He is body 140 cm. Every day we play and do chores together, this my friend is the smartest, kidd in the class. He always get the firts rank. We are friend since childhood. I am proud of friendship. My friend fur is white and brown , so I call her” bagong”. Muh. Reza like eat meatball. But he has dream want to be sailor”. The student’ writing above shows that there are significantly improvements of students’ writing in five components given in writing after treatment.

E. Conclusion

The researcher concludes that the use of Contextual Teaching and Learning approach is effective to improve students’ ability in writing descriptive text based on the following evidences:

1. Students’ prior knowledge of writing descriptive text before applying Contextual Teaching and Learning approach is still low. It was provided by the data that most of students got poor and fair classification with mean score of the students’ pre-test was 51.55.
2. Students’ ability in writing descriptive text after applying Contextual Teaching and Learning approach is significantly improved their writing ability. It was showed by the data that most of them got very good and good classification with mean score of students’ post test was 76.86.

REFERENCES

- Adelstein, M.E., and Prival 1980. *The Writing Commitment*. 2nd. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. Inc.
- Bennet, Lyn. 2006. *The Nature of Writing*. Rozelle. NSW: Primary English Teaching Association.
- Blanchard. 2001. *Contextual Teaching and Learning*. Horizons Electronic Lesson Plans, Retrieved September 24th, 2014, from <http://www.horizonshelp.org/contextual/contextual.htm>.
- Gay, L.R. 1991. *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Application*, Florida International University.
- Gebhard., Jerry G. 1996. *Teaching English Language Teaching*. New York: Longman Publishing.
- Heaton, J. B. 1988. *Writing English Language Tests*. New York: Longman Handbook for Language Teachers.
- Johnson, Elane B. 2009. *Contextual teaching and Learning*. Bandung: Mizan Learning Centre.
- Pardiyono. 2007. *Teaching Genre-Based Writing*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Andi.