

Modified Reading Program to Improve Students' Motivation in Writing Skill of Second Grade in Junior High School

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Abstract: *This paper investigates the effects of a reading programme on the narrative writing skills of 14 Junior High School students in the grade eight. A total of four narrative texts closely were shared to the students. This quantitative-qualitative research study involved 60 students who participated in a four-week intervention programme. The scores from two groups indicated significant differences in the students' content development, lexical variety and grammatical accuracy. The findings show that high motivation gave an improvement in the writing narrative text in content, lexical variety and grammatical accuracy in students' essays. The students' improvement in the content development aspect shows that reading texts which supplement information common to the students' background will help them in their content development specifically and writing performance on the whole. The study also shows that the reading materials, vocabulary input and comprehension exercises motivated the students to improve on their use of lexical variety and grammatical structure. The results support the notion that comprehensible input (Krashen, 1984) and appropriate language instructional exercises for writing intervention enable engaged learning by the students. The study therefore recommends that teachers should utilise authentic reading materials that are relevant to the background knowledge of the students in teaching writing to the students in junior high school.*

Keywords: *reading program; students' motivation; writing development; narrative writing;*

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I. Introduction

Nowadays, motivation to study has become the important thing in learning. The teacher has responsibility to motivate the learners in order they master in using language. According to Winkel (1989: 99), teacher has to try to develop to the students' motivation to study. One common question is that English teachers often ask themselves, "How do we motivate students to learn English?" Students' motivation has continually become a major concern for them, because students' motivation is critical for the effectiveness of English teaching and learning.

Wide spread of English these days influencing people in many countries requires students to learn English at school because it is the most common language used to conduct business. It is estimated that there are 300 million The students have learned kinds of texts, such as recount, procedure, narrative and descriptive texts. In this stage, they should be able to use their idea and write down into a good paragraph. So, when they have to write in narrative text, they should not have many difficulties. A study by Mahadi (2018) shows that the reading materials, vocabulary input, and comprehension exercises help the students to improve on their use of lexical variety and grammatical structure. A similar study, which also explored, comprehensible input and appropriate language instructional exercises for writing intervention enable engaged learning by the students (Krashen,1984). In addition, studies have shown that having the right input of reading is important when a second language or foreign language is concerned (Renandya, 2007). Moreover, frequent reading and writing exercises have a positive impact on writing performance (Tsang, 1996). By reading before writing can make students easier to face the vocabulary and grammatical problem. It is because by reading the students have experience in comprehending, not only the meaning of the words but also comprehend grammatical structure. Hence, one method of enhancing the grammatical and lexical mastery is via reading, a notion that gives emphasis to the impact of extensive reading (Renandya,2007; Tsang, 1996)

In acquiring a second language, writing skills is known to post the greatest challenge to both the learners and the teachers. In a writing task, the learners are required to deliver their ideas, feelings, thoughts and experiences into text (Grabe, 2001; Hyland, 2003; Zainal & Husin, 2011). Like wise, the teachers need to convey and deliver the content of the material will be taught and about the way for the students start writing. It gives influence for the teacher's performance if the students' performance is good in that process. So, the teacher's inevitably need the expertise and ability to teach the students to write (Hyland, 2003). Richards and Renandya (2002: 30) state that "There is no doubt that writing is the most difficult skill for EFL learners to master. The difficulty lies not only in generating and organizing ideas, but also in translating these ideas into

readable texts. They found that lower level students used their L1 more than the advance students, an evident pitfall caused by several factors such as lack of vocabulary acquisition and interest.

In the case of English as foreign language early identification of students who are at risk for writing difficulties is an important first step in improving writing performance (David and Ritchey ; 2014). First grade students (N = 150) were administered a set of early writing measures and reading measures in January. Sentence Writing Quality and Oral Reading Fluency demonstrated strong classification accuracy when a Teacher Rating was used to identify which students had writing difficulties (AUC > .90), and the combined measures yielded sensitivity and specificity indices exceeding 0.90. Here, reading skills may be an important component for identifying risk for writing difficulties. Given the shared foundation of many reading and writing skills and the comorbidity of reading and writing problems for students (Hooper et al., 2010;Katusic et al., 2009). Reading measures may serve to improve the accuracy. When the students perceive the text positively, they will have a lower level of apprehension towards the writing tasks and thus increase their readiness to write (Abd Rahim, Jaganathan & Tengku Mahadi, 2016). The present study is therefore, motivated by the proposition that a reading program that is relevant and familiar to the reader's background will have an impact for the students' writing skill. Thus, this study has purpose to investigate the process of the impact from reading giving improvement to motivate the students in writing skill for the students. The research questions based on the objective of the study include :

- (1) To find out the problems faced by the students in the process of writing narrative texts,
- (2) To know the improvement of the students' motivation in writing narrative texts through the reading program

II. Methodology

Sample

The target population of the current study are students in the second grade of fourteen junior high school . All the students have studied about writing narrative by using direct translation they are always tend use dictionary when they write into foreign language . They are difficult write a text without open dictionary. Then the teacher gives the students new method for improving their writing performance in learning foreign language. Some narrative text is conducted for the students to teaching reading and writing to the groups, and to discuss and the marking of students' essay writing.

Instrument

The research instrument for teaching narrative writing by reading program are observation sheet to know the teaching process by using reading program. Beside observation the writer also gives close-ended questioner for the students to know their motivation and also their respond after using the method after learning process. The questionnaire measures their motivation toward writing after using reading program method. In addition the writer uses documentation about everything happen in teaching learning process. Different with the other techniques in collecting the data, documentation is not reactive so that the subject cannot hide something (Setiyadi,2006).

The researcher also gives pre test and post test to the student in order to know the comparison the result of writing by translating and writing reading program between two groups. So that, in this research there is two groups as control group and experiment group. The pre-test was administered to evaluate the students' initial writing skills, while the later was administered to measure the effect of reading on the students' writing achievement. The test duration was one hour, and both test were graded according to the writing scale by the school. The scores were also administered by three raters. To measure the writing performance of the students, the school's marking scale for writing was used besides the guideline by English Expository Writing Rubric (2011) that was adapted and discusses by the teachers for assessment purpose. The measures cover three components of writing performance including content, lexical variety and grammatical accuracy. Table 1 below illustrates the allocation of marks.

TABLE 1 Components for assessing the writing tasks and marking rubrics

| Components | Description | Mark allocation |
|----------------------|---|-----------------|
| Content | ideas are clearly focused on topic specified | 4 points |
| | most ideas are focused on topic but important facts and information was either unclear or omitted | 3 points |
| | ideas are generally related to the topic with the presence of some irrelevant and repetitive facts and details | 2 points |
| | few facts related to topic with little evidence provided | 1 point |
| Lexical variety | word choice and tone that is purposeful, precise and clear | 4 points |
| | most part clear and specific with appropriate tone | 3 points |
| | general word choice with little establishment on the appropriate tone | 2 points |
| | vague or limited word choice with inappropriate tone | 1 point |
| Grammatical Accuracy | consistent command of grammar – (spelling accuracy, punctuation tenses, subject-verb agreement and discourse markers) | 4 points |
| | adequate command of grammar | 3 points |
| | partial command of grammar | 2 points |
| | poor command of grammar | 1 point |

III. Result And Discussion

Cycle 1

Table 2 Independent Group Statistics

| | | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|-------------|-----------|----|---------|----------------|-----------------|
| Content CC1 | Pre-test | 30 | 66.2333 | 10.51988 | 1.92066 |
| | Post test | 30 | 69.4667 | 9.70863 | 1.77254 |
| Lexical CC1 | Pre-test | 30 | 63.8333 | 10.85352 | 1.98157 |
| | Post test | 30 | 65.5333 | 10.21403 | 1.86482 |
| Grammar CC1 | Pre-test | 30 | 63.4000 | 10.17638 | 1.85794 |
| | Post test | 30 | 64.9667 | 9.84179 | 1.79686 |
| Content EC1 | Pre-test | 30 | 69.4667 | 9.70863 | 1.77254 |
| | Post test | 30 | 70.6333 | 10.09433 | 1.84296 |
| Lexical EC1 | Pre-test | 30 | 64.7333 | 9.50838 | 1.73598 |
| | Post test | 30 | 70.5333 | 8.29929 | 1.51524 |
| Grammar EC1 | Pre-test | 30 | 64.3000 | 10.22893 | 1.86754 |
| | Post test | 30 | 69.0333 | 8.19370 | 1.49596 |

Cycle 2

Table 3 Independent Group Statistics

| | | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|-------------|-----------|----|---------|----------------|-----------------|
| Content CC2 | Pre-test | 30 | 66.6000 | 11.03787 | 2.01523 |
| | Post test | 30 | 67.5667 | 10.46071 | 1.90986 |
| Lexical CC2 | Pre-test | 30 | 65.3000 | 9.88259 | 1.80431 |
| | Post test | 30 | 66.2667 | 9.70223 | 1.77138 |
| Grammar CC2 | Pre-test | 30 | 63.9000 | 10.03906 | 1.83287 |
| | Post test | 30 | 65.5333 | 8.86968 | 1.61938 |
| Content EC2 | Pre-test | 30 | 69.8333 | 8.74183 | 1.59603 |
| | Post test | 30 | 74.6333 | 8.29825 | 1.51505 |
| Lexical EC2 | Pre-test | 30 | 65.8333 | 9.28508 | 1.69522 |
| | Post test | 30 | 68.6333 | 8.35209 | 1.52488 |
| Grammar EC2 | Pre-test | 30 | 65.6000 | 9.31665 | 1.70098 |
| | Post test | 30 | 69.6333 | 8.09633 | 1.47818 |

Independent group T-Test were carried out to compare two groups of the pre-test and post test scores of the learners in junior high school. Table 2 and table 3 display the mean scores between two groups in the pre-test and post test scores in the three writing components : content, lexical variety and grammatical accuracy. As the descriptive data in table 2 and table 3 show, the mean scores of the students in experiment class is higher than the scores in all writing aspects of the students in the control class. Increasing higher core was happen in experiment class more over in the post test. We can see in the meeting 2, the learners improve most in the contents aspect in which their mean score 69.8 in the pre test to 74.6 in the post test. The mean score for lexical variety in the pre-test 65.8 to 68.6 in the post test. The means score for grammar in the pre test 65.6 o 69.6 in the post test. Each component in experiment class has significant increasing between pre-test and post test. It is different with the control group there is increasing the means score in control group but the increasing is not too significant in all aspects of writing. The means score for content in the pre-test 66.6 to 67.5 in the post test. The mean score for grammar in the pre- test 63.9 to 65.5 in the post test. The means score for lexical 65.3 to 66.2 in the post test. Students' error means in the control class more higher than in the experiment class. It can be seen from from table 2 and table 3. In the experiment class from meeting 1to meeting 2 were reduce in the post test. It can be said that the reading program is more effective to improve writing skill.

These finding are generally consistent with previous studies that showed a positive impact of reading in developing content for writing (Belcher & Hirvela. 2001). The findings are also supported by Tsang (1996) who found that reading and frequent writing practice improved writing performance. It can be seen from the score in the table 2 and table 3.

Table 4. Students' Motivation of Using A Reading Program

| Student' Motivation | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------------|-----------|---------|
| High | 24 | 80% |
| Low | 6 | 20% |

From table 4, it can be seen that students' responses in experiment class, showed that 24 students from 30student have high motivation in reading program, and the rest are low motivation in using this technique. In short, this technique is motivate the student in writing.

The improvement of grammatical accuracy, sentence structure and knowledge of vocabulary through reading has also been reported in several studies (Catts et.al, 1999). This was because of the repetitive instructional practices in class that helped them recall the contextual words and structures that could be used in their writing. The students easier in remembering the words from the text then write.

Overall, the result show positive impact of the reading program in enhancing the students' motivation and the students' performance in writing skill in the aspects of content, lexical, and grammatical accuracy.

IV. Conclusion

This study investigates the process and the differences between Writing Narrative by translating L1 and Writing Narrative by Reading Program of students in Junior High school. The findings showed that there is improvement for students' motivation and teaching process of the students in the experiment class had significantly higher in the post test scores for content, use of lexical variety and grammatical accuracy in the cycle two of the experiment class which use Reading Program. This findings of this study illustrate that students

who are provided with the appropriate sample texts and vocabulary for writing narratives and are exposed to similar narratives repeatedly would be able to improve their writing performance. And also by using this program, some students were motivated and more involved in learning process than using translation L1 by using dictionary or by searching from the internet. Their thinking process in comprehension the vocabulary is better than translation.

Although the means score differences in the lexical, content and grammatical aspects are quite small, the differences are significant. This is because, some of the students who had a higher level of anxiety in writing were able to engage in classroom discussion when learning process and provide some output in their writing tasks.

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