

USING CHAIN STORY TO IMPROVE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' ABILITY IN WRITING NARRATIVE TEXTS

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Abstract

Di antara tiga keterampilan (menyimak, berbicara, dan membaca), menulis dianggap sebagai keterampilan yang paling kompleks dan sulit bagi para pebelajar Bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing, khususnya bagi pebelajar muda (siswa Sekolah Menengah Umum). Seorang guru harus menciptakan cara yang interaktif untuk mengajarkan kemampuan menulis kepada pebelajar. Penelitian ini memaparkan penggunaan cerita berantai dalam pengajaran keterampilan menulis teks narasi. Tiga langkah yang digunakan meliputi prapembelajaran, kegiatan inti pembelajaran, dan paska pembelajaran. Partisipan penelitian adalah siswa SMU kelas dua sebanyak 34 siswa. Guna menghasilkan cerita, guru menyediakan potongan-potongan gambar dan meminta para siswa untuk menyusunnya menjadi sebuah gambar yang utuh sebelum menulisnya menjadi sebuah cerita. Penggunaan cerita berantai bisa meningkatkan motivasi, kosa kata, kreatifitas, dan kelancaran para siswa.

Kata kunci: Cerita berantai, meningkatkan, teks narasi

INTRODUCTION

As a foreign language in Indonesia, English makes many students reluctant to learn because it is difficult. For Junior High School Students, writing is perhaps more challenging and hard because it is very complex for most young learners in Indonesia. It is in line with writing, Cahyono and Widiati (2011) say that writing is often believed to be the most complex one compared to the three other skills, i.e. listening, speaking, and reading. Teaching writing needs much concern from the teachers in Junior high school.

Unfortunately, there is not much time to teach writing in secondary level because teachers have to teach others skills; listening, reading, and speaking equally. The period given in teaching English, particularly writing becomes one of teachers' problems at almost Indonesian secondary school.

From preliminary observation and interview to some English teachers in SMP Negeri 1 Sidoarjo can be identified that the lack of vocabulary and grammar knowledge probably becomes the main problems why students are reluctant to write. Without having a good knowledge of both, students

will find it difficult to write, even to start writing. In fact, many students have few vocabularies in English. Although they may use dictionary to get the meaning some difficult words, it is not very helpful in exploring their ideas. Moreover, students also have to use the English grammar where it is different from Indonesian in several aspects. It cannot be avoided that students only study several grammatical patterns taught by the teachers so it results many students hardly organize their thought into a phrase or a sentence. Surely, they must provide themselves with sufficient knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.

Teaching technique is also crucial to determine the success of the course. Various techniques of teaching can be modified by the teachers to gain the objective. Unfortunately, teachers' technique in teaching writing frequently cannot attract the students' interest or enthusiasm in writing. Some techniques applied by teachers are not what the most students prefer. For example, students are only asked to write an event without providing enough guidance such as topics /ideas, useful vocabularies and mediums of practicing. Actually, this activity is very boring to the students. Besides the three aspects, teachers should

give an example of text that students are going to produce. Moreover, the students' motivation has an important role. It can be understood easily that it is very hard for students how to start writing without any motivation. The interesting technique by using certain tools and media is expected to be beneficial to students. The lack of vocabulary and grammar knowledge can be minimized by giving the appropriate technique which they students interested in.

A story consists of several events that are linked one to another. An event in story has a link to the previous and the next events. In addition, this study provides several useful words (nouns, adjectives, and verbs). To easy students figure out the story, every event is also equipped by the pictures. In short, words and picture in on event guide students to illustrate the story easily. This study adopts the mechanism of chain to show that among those pictures can be drawn into a fully understanding story. In short, chain story is assumed as the speaking pictures which guides the students predict, illustrate, link, and arrange every event becoming one logical story.

In secondary level, some types of text (descriptive and recount) are taught and one of them is narrative. According to

Emilia (2011), narrative is a kind of text which is often found in everyday life. It functions to tell a story of person, people, and culture it also entertains the readers or audience.

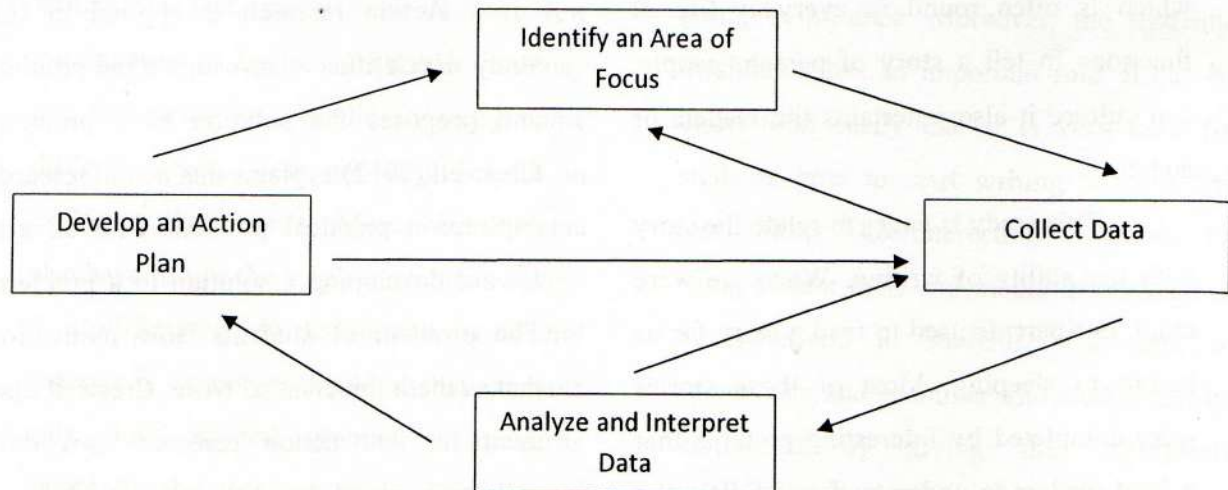
This study is eager to relate the story with the ability of writing. When we were child, our parents used to read a story for us before to sleeping. Most of those stories were completed by interesting pictures that helped readers to understand and follow the story easily and interestingly. In short, sufficient aids and tools in teaching will help students become motivated to learn. The previous study conducted by Hasanah (2011) shows that the use of picture sequences as media in teaching writing process could improve the students' ability in writing. The aim of this study is to investigate the use of chain story in teaching writing narrative texts for junior high students. It also tries to use the effect of that technique in assisting students' writing.

METHOD

Action research is applied in this study which aims to investigate the problem and proposes the solution to a problem. Creswell (2012) explains that action research explores a practical problem with an aim toward developing a solution to a problem. The problem of students' low motivation makes them reluctant to write. Creswell also mentions that action research uses data collection based on either quantitative or qualitative method or both. There are two types of action research designs (practical and participatory) proposed by Creswell. This study uses practical action research as it aims to help teachers to find out their own classroom problem, and they can improve their students learning and their own professional performance.

There are four stages to conduct action research; (1) data collection and a focus, (2) data collection, (3) analysis, (4) interpretation (Mills in Creswell, 2012). This figure shows how the four stages work.

Figure 1. Mills (2011) Dialectic Action Research Spiral



Identify an Area of Focus

This stage consists of review literature, and writing an action research to guide a research. The preliminary study

shows that students could only produce few sentences in writing. Table 1 figures out the result of preliminary study.

Table 1. The Frequency Distribution of the Students' Writing

Level	Frequency	%
1	0	0%
2	20	57%
3	11	32%
4	3	11%
Total	34	100%

From the table, it can be seen that more than 57% students get level 2 and there is only 11% students getting level 4. It shows that writing is difficult for most students in SMP Negeri 1 Sidoarjo. This table indicates that there should be

alternative techniques in teaching writing narrative texts.

There were 34 students involving in this study. They were from SMP Negeri 1 Sidoarjo (20 females and 14 males). All students were from second grade and they

are classmate (Grade 8) In SMP Negeri 1 Sidoarjo, total of second grade are 6 classes. The English teachers didn't participate in this study. Therefore, the researcher became as an English teacher during the data collection. School English teacher only provided the information about the students' materials, proficiency, and syllabus.

Technique of Data Collecting

Data are collected from participant observation, standardized test (writing test), and questionnaire. Three weeks are needed to conduct this study whereas first week was for pre-test, second week for applying the techniques, and third week for final draft of writing and filling the questionnaire. There

was seventy minutes provided in every week. There are three instruments in collecting the data such as observation, writing test, and questionnaire. In addition, this study applied three steps; pre-teaching, whilst teaching, and post teaching. Observation is conducted in every step while writing test is only given in the first and third step. Here is the rubric for students' writing which is adopted from Heaton (1991) focusing on five components in writing: content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics (see Table 2). This study only used vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. It was done because the students are beginners.

Table 2. The Instrument Used

Activity (Step)	Assessment		
	Process	Product	Instrument
Pre – Teaching	Motivating students Giving popular some narrative stories Dividing students into some group	--	Observation, checklist, field notes
Whilst- Teaching	Every student in a group carries on his/her partner sentences to complete the story (by looking the pictures) Students write the outlines	Student' writing of outlines	Observation, checklist, field notes, and writing
Post- Teaching		Students' writing	

To evaluate the success of students' writing, the researcher formulated the criteria of success which guided him to analyze the students' writing. Table 3 shows some criteria used in this study. The criteria

focus on two elements: process and product. The process is used to check how well the activity work and the product is used to see students' ability in writing.

Table 3. Success Criteria

Success Criteria	Data	Source	Techniques of Data Collection
The process:			
• Students' motivation get increased	Observation	Students' response	Observing
• Students are able to carry on the event	Students' writing of sentence	Students' writing of illustrating the story	
• Students make Outline the pictures	Students' writing of outline	Writing outlines	
• Students write a complete story	Students' writing of a complete story	Students' draft writing	
The product			
If one student achieve level 3 and 4	Score	Students' writing	Scoring rubric for students

In scoring students' writing, the researcher uses three components to be marked; content, language, and spelling. Every component determines level 1 for the

lowest achievement until level 4 for the highest one. The table below illustrates the detail of scoring rubric.

Table 4. Scoring Rubric

Writing Components	Level	Scale and Description
Content	4	The content is relevant to the topic and easy to understand
	3	The content is almost complete and relevant to the topic
	2	The content is relevant to the topic but is not easy to understand
	1	The content is not quite relevant to the topic
Language use	4	Few (90% or above) grammatical and inaccuracies

	3	A few (70-89%) grammatical and inaccuracies
	2	Numerous (50-69%) grammatical and inaccuracies
	1	Frequent (49% or below) grammatical and inaccuracies
Spelling	4	Almost (90% or above) no inaccuracies in spelling
	3	A few (70-89%) inaccuracies in spelling
	2	Low (50-69%) standard of accuracies
	1	No (49% or below) accuracy in spelling

Technique of Data Analysis and Interpretation

This stage can be seen clearly in the result of this study which showing the findings of the study. The findings are gained from all instrument used in this study such as observation, interviews, students' writing, and questionnaires.

RESULTS

The result of observation in the first meeting indicated that students were not motivated to write a story. It could be seen from their attitudes response toward the task of writing. It seemed they didn't know how to start. It can be seen that there were a few students being able to carry on the chain story provided. Most of them did not know how link the previous event with next event. This occurred because many students had

few problems in vocabulary. There were only some students having the adequate vocabulary.

Writing Task in Group

From six groups, there are only two groups (35%) which each member were able to link the whole events in the one story, and four others (65%) could only link some events. To make it easy, every event is represented by one picture. By working in group, the result of writing the outlines shows that group 2 and 4 which all members could link the events can produce the complete writing outlines of a story while the other four groups, only group 5 who could complete it. It means the others group could not complete it. They were group 1, 3, and 6. Table 5 shows the result of completing writing the outlines.

Table 5. Number of Outlines

Group	Number of Outlines	Target Outlines
1	5	8
2	6	8
3	4	8
4	7	8
5	6	8
6	3	8

The outlines which had been written were going to be explained into paragraph. The result indicated that students in group 2, 4, and 5 were able to write a story based on the outlines they made. Group 2 produced eight paragraphs from six outlines, Group 4 produced eight paragraphs from seven outlines, and Group 5 produced six

paragraphs from six outlines. The other groups produced paragraph less than the outlines they made. For examples, Group 1 produced three paragraphs from five outlines, Group 3 produced two paragraphs from four outlines, and Group 6 produced two paragraphs from three outlines.

Table 6. Number of paragraph

Group	Number of Outlines	Number of Paragraph
1	5	3
2	6	8
3	4	2
4	7	8
5	6	6
6	3	2

Writing Task for Individual

From 34 students, there are 22 out of 34 students who could link (by writing the outlines) the whole events in the one story, and 8 out of 34 students could only link some events. Every event is represented by one picture. By working individually, most

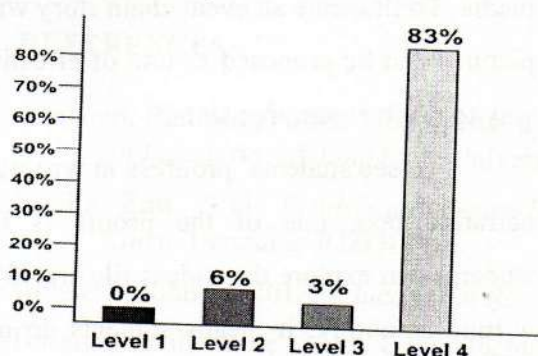
students were able to link one event to other events.

After composing a story using the outlines, the result shows that mostly students achieved the significant level of writing. There were 83% of students getting level 4, and there were 7% of students getting level 3. The others were in level 2

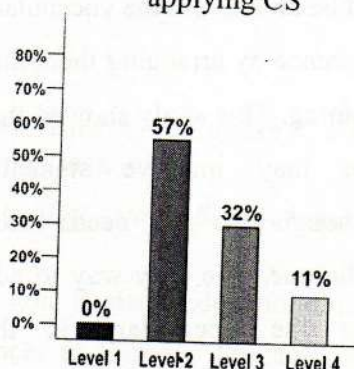
(6%) and level 1 (4%). It indicated that there was an improvement of the use of chain

story in writing narrative texts. The graphic below showed in detail.

Graphic 1. Students writing level in preliminary Study.



Graphic 2. Students writing level In After applying CS



DISCUSSION

The analysis of students' attitude toward the use of chain story relating to writing a narrative text revealed four benefits from this study: motivation, vocabulary, creativity, and fluency. All of them are supported one to another.

Students showed their positive response toward the use of chain story in writing narrative texts. It was indicated when most of students enjoyed the activity of writing during learning process. In the beginning of the class and before the application of chain story, most students thought that writing was very difficult and boring. It resulted many students were reluctant to write. It happened because they

had very limited knowledge in vocabulary and grammar. After the use of chain story was used in the class, the atmosphere of learning gradually changed. It meant students became motivated to enjoy writing as one of learning activity in the class. It can be said this technique could be used to improve the students' motivation and aptitude in writing a narrative texts. In short, raising students' motivation must be the priority in teaching. Without any motivation, the goal of learning would be hard to gain.

The second benefit is dealing with vocabulary in which students could improve their productive vocabulary. Students should maximize their productive vocabulary in writing narrative text since it is needed many

vocabulary to produce phrases or sentences. Productive vocabulary is the set of words that an individual can use the writing or speaking (Hiebert and Kamil, 2005). Then, students should be able to use the vocabulary in phrase or sentence by arranging them into intelligible meaning. This study showed that this technique may improve students' vocabulary although this still needs more revision of technique. The easy way to add and memorize the vocabulary is the examples. Improving vocabulary is the good news not only for teachers but also students. The chain story provided the pictures encouraged students to use the cognitive in understanding the pictures. In beginning of writing activity, most students showed their lack of vocabulary in writing. Using bilingual dictionary was not necessarily helpful for young learners. Exploring students' prior knowledge and prerequisite contributes very significant effects in improving students' vocabulary.

The use of chain story leads the students creative in writing. Creativity is very important in writing because this activity without creativity would not be useful. To make students to be creative is the key to make their productive knowledge. This technique proved that students become

creative. The use of chain story with pictures raises the students' creativity in writing. Many previous studies have shown the effectiveness of using an interesting tool or media. To illustrate an event chain story with pictures can be proposed as one of effective way to teach a narrative text.

To see students' progress in writing a narrative text, one of the proofs is the students can explore their ideas illustrated in writing smoothly. It means students do not have many obstacles when they want to pour their ideas into writing. In brief, teaching writing for young learners acquires the interesting techniques to easy students' understanding of subject matters.

CONCLUSION

Motivation and the lack of English knowledge particularly vocabulary are the basic problems in writing for junior high students. As the beginners of English, they really need an innovative way from their teacher. Encouraging students' motivation is the first priority to teach English not only for beginners but also for upper level. Students' motivation can be gained if they are interested in teacher's technique and classroom atmosphere. The chain story (CS) technique proves that students' motivation, vocabulary, creativity, and fluency in writing

narrative text get increased and improved. It is necessary to note that the use of chain story (CS) is only one technique in teaching narrative texts particularly for beginners.

This study has proved that by using CS junior high students are able to write a narrative story much better than before using chain story.

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APPENDIX: WORKSHET FOR A NARRATIVE TEXT

Instruction 1: describe the following events (pictures)

Instruction 2: Mention the three generic structure of the story and give examples

1. Who
When.....
Where.....
2. Major character.....
Minor character.....
Major problem.....
3. Problem solving
Purpose / moral

Instruction 3: Write the complete story from the chain story

Orientation
Complication
Reorientation

Instruction 3: Write the complete story from the chain pictures you have set.

Table 2. Questionnaire

No	Questions	Positive	Negative	Not Clear
1	The feeling of CS	85%	15%	
2	The benefits of CS	83%	10%	7%
3	The weaknesses of CS	12%	88%	
4	The students' progress	87%	13%	
5	Their motivation	88%	12%	