

STUDENTS' CRITICAL THINKING OF EXPLANATION WRITING

Linda Mayasari, Ria Novia
lindamayasari@kip.um-surabaya.ac.id
Universitas Muhammadiyah Surabaya

ABSTRACT

This research paper aims to describe the use of task-based learning strategy in teaching learning writing explanation at tenth grade of senior high school. The research focused on the use of task-based learning strategy to improve students' critical thinking ability in explanation writing. This classroom action research consists of one cycle and in the cycle consisted of four steps: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The subject of this research was the students of tenth grade in SMA Negeri 13 Surabaya. In analyzing and collecting the data, it used the information from the interview, observation in the class and the achievement of the students' writing. Brown's theory and Willis' theory were utilized to find out more about the writing and critical thinking of students' in writing explanation through task based learning. Based on the analysis, it can be seen through TBL, the students were able to perform six components of critical thinking suggested by NEIU's in CTL (the issues, context, perspective, assumption, evidence and implication) in their explanation writing under the topic eco-composition.

Key words: Writing, Task-Based Learning, Eco-composition, Critical Thinking.

INTRODUCTION

Language is an important tool in communications. That means people can express their ideas, thoughts, desires and feelings by using language. In Indonesia, English is considered as a foreign language and subject to be taught in schools. One of the main aims of teaching English in the schools is developing the ability

of communication of students. The ability of communication involves the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. One of the important skills to be mastered by the students is writing. Writing allows us to record and convey information and communication and stories beyond the immediate moment. It means that writing allows us to communicate at distance, either at a distant place or distant of time.

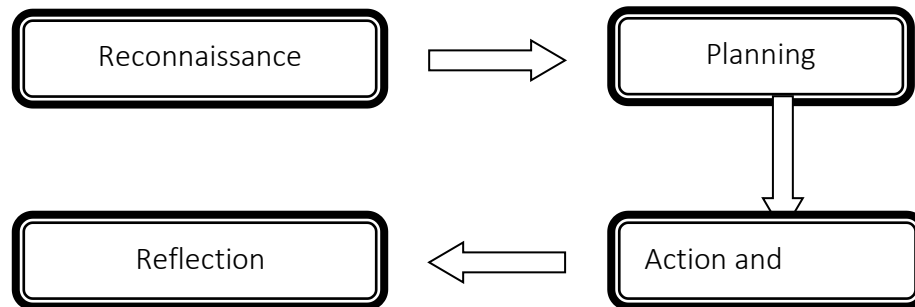
Students use writing to communicate each other, as an ideas and emotional expression. When the students write their ideas and emotions correctly and creatively, it means they are communicating on paper in best purposes and ways. A good technique can help the students understand in comprehending and mastering the lesson. Willis (1996: 23) stated that “task is an activity where the target language used by learners for a communicative goal in order to achieve an outcome”. Task-Based Learning is not just about getting learner to do task and then another. By TBL learners would probably become quite expert at doing tasks and resourceful with their language. Task-based learning in classroom activities are envisioned here in terms of tripartite division into what Willis refers to as the ‘pre-task’, ‘task cycle’ and ‘language focus’ components.

The implementation of Task-Based Learning in this research related to the critical thinking ability of students. Schafersman (1991: 1) stated “Critical thinking is an important and vital topic in modern education”. It involves thinking precisely and systematically, and following the rules of logic and scientific reasoning, among others things. Now days, we have to use our critical thinking through our daily life including environment eco-composition. Orr w. David (2002: 13) stated that there has been a steadily growing void between the control of humanity over its environment and the lack of specific, general knowledge and attention about it among individuals. As advanced within the field of environment education, ecology, and the broader humanity respectively.

This research focused on the use of task-based learning strategy to improve students’ critical thinking ability in explanation writing. It used task-based learning in improving students’ critical thinking of students because the students had lack critical thinking in giving some opinion or solution related to their subject. In this era there are many students also have less critical in what happening to their environment so that eco-composition is implemented as the topic in the research. Critical thinker is someone who understands the logical connection between idea and fact, identify, construct, evaluate arguments, and analyze problems systematically. Orr w. David (2002: 13) stated that there has been a steadily growing void between the control of humanity over its environment and the lack of specific, general knowledge and attention about it among individuals.

RESEARCH METHOD

The subject of this research was tenth grade students at SMAN 13. This research applied the classroom action research model by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988: 89-108) According to them action research typically involved four phases in a cycle. Each step is elaborated as follows:



As an action classroom research, the data are into two kinds namely qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data was analyzed from the observation sheet, interview, notes, and documentation to describe the ability of student in writing explanation text by using task-based learning. Quantitative data is analyzed by computing the score of writing test. Before computing the data, the result of writing tests was assessed by using Brown's scoring rubric in writing (2003: 244-245) and critical thinking rubric from NEIU's in CTL Bulletin (2005). The students' scores were computed in every writing test within one cycle in order to see students' ability in writing explanation text and their critical thinking skills.

RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Based on the observation, some problems were faced by the students such as they did not had ideas to write, they were confused in organizing in writing, lack vocabulary and less critical thinking in giving comment and solution related to the topic. Those problems were important to be solved and the implementation of Task-Based Learning (TBL) were chosen as the method to improve students writing and critical thinking ability in writing explanation text in the class by giving topic about climate changes as their topic to encourage their critical thinking.

Willis (1996: 26) has stated about several types of TBL tasks which could be implemented. They are: listing, ranking items, comparing items, problems-solving activities and creative tasks. Among those types of TBL, comparing items and problem-solving activities were implemented in teaching-learning activity in the class related to this research. The comparison and problem solving activities of TBL was executed by asking the students to make comparison between two

things. In this case they compared about natural phenomena or in specific about climate change so the students had to problem solving related to the topic.

This research applied the activities of TBL processes which is from Willis Willis (1996) The followings are the process of task based learning in explanation writing:

a. Pre-task: Teacher show video about natural phenomena and introduce a topic about “explanation text” to the students.

b. Task cycle: The teacher gives a clear instruction to them what they have to do for the task and then remind them some language structure (tenses) that might be useful for the task. Teacher set up a communication task which students encouraged to do the task and then ask them to prepare a report about how they do the task.

Task: Teacher asks the students to do the task in small groups related to the worksheet which is given by teacher about natural phenomena.

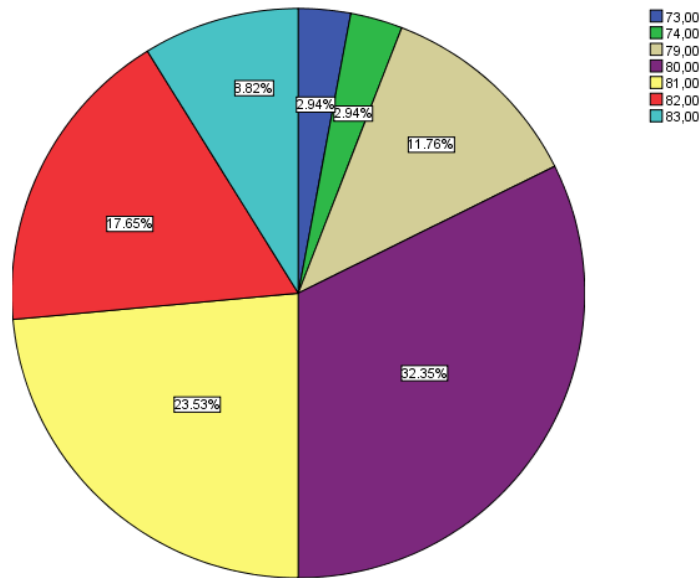
Planning: Teacher asks the students to prepare their report to class and then each group compares the result.

Report: Teacher asks the students (small group) to present their report to class and then each group compares the result.

c. Language focus: Teacher explains the language structure, such as the tenses of the sentence in the writing text.

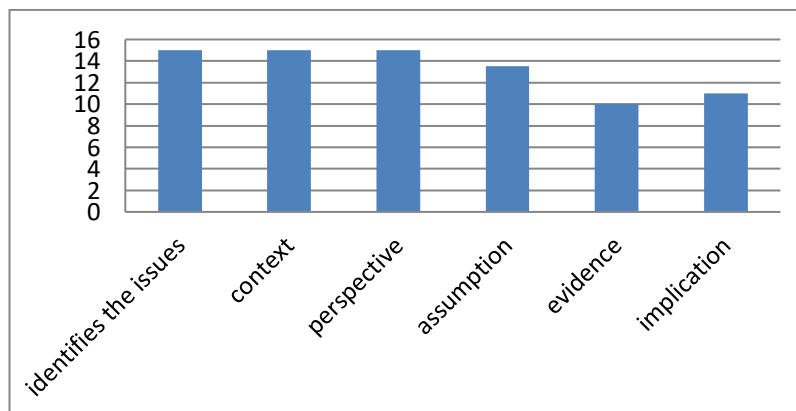
Analysis: Teacher gives an examination for the students and then asks the students to discuss the specific features of the text in slide of PPT.

Practice: Teacher gives a practice for the students to answer some questions related to subject of the explanation text which has been explained.



1. Chart of students' score in explanation writing

This pie chart shows the result of posttest after the implementation of TBL in explanation writing. It is clear that majority of the students were able to write an explanation paragraphs. Around 95% is reaching minimum mastery criteria, 75 pts. There were few students who had the score at 73 and 74 but their scores were just two points below the minimum mastery. This study has the same result with Desmayenni, et all (2012) who investigated task-based learning in writing. Even there were some differences, just like the genre of writings. They focused on descriptive text for class X. Then, the class was considered big one. So for the writers this was a kind of challenge to teach writing by using TBL.



2. The average of Students' Critical Thinking Aspects

The bar chart gives some information about the means of students' critical thinking aspects. These data are the result of calculation based on the critical thinking rubric from NEIU's in CTL Bulletin (2005). Six out of seven components were used to analyze critical thinking, they were identifies the issues, context, perspective, assumption, evidence, and implication.

In the point of **Identifies and Explain Issues**, the students were in the level of superior (15). It means that they clearly could be able to identify and make a brief statement about main issues and justify the reason why the cases happen. For **Context**, they got 15 which can be inferred they recognized the fact and relevant theory which are based on the context. They gained 15 in **Perspective** which can be said they made a precise opinion and were opened toward contrast stand point. Furthermore they were good at finding and evaluating all the important assumptions, it happened since the average score at **Assumption aspect** was 13. Then the class mostly was able to get the proof to support their justification (score 10 for evidence). And they were able to identify and briefly examine **implications**, conclusions, and impact regarding irrelevant assumptions, context, data and proof.

The good output after the implementation of task based learning in writing is not only about writing but also the quality of writing, less or high. Relating to the bar chart, it testified that task- based learning is effective to shape the students became critical writers. The other research found that task-based writing brought a positive impact in sector of creativity (Marashi, Hamid., Dadari, Lida : 2012).

CONCLUSION

As final remark, to be a critical thinker takes times, stimulus, and strategy. Task based learning which is adapted in to writing class can be one among several ways to build critical skill in writing.

REFERENCES

- Brown, H. Douglas. 2004. *Language Assessment*. San Francisco University: Longman.
- Desmayenni, et all .2012. Implementation Of Task Based Learning Method In Writing Descriptive Text. Vol. 1 No 1. U-JET, Unila Journal of English Teaching. Retrieved on

<http://jurnal.fkip.unila.ac.id/index.php/123/article/view/11105>

- Kemmis, Stephen, McTaggart, Robin Rhonda Nixon. 2014. *The Action Research Planner_Doing Critical Participatory Action Research*. Springer: Verlag Singapore.
- Marashi, Hamid., Dadari, Lida. 2012 . The Impact of Using Task-based Writing on EFL Learners' Writing Performance and Creativity. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 12, pp. 2500-2507, ACADEMY PUBLISHER Manufactured in Finland. doi:10.4304/tpis.2.12.2500-2507. Retrieved on <http://www.academypublication.com/issues/past/tpis/vol02/12/07.pdf>
- NEIU's Critical Thinking Rubric in CTL Bulletin. 2005. Retrieved on https://web.uri.edu/assessment/files/CriticalThinkingRubric_NEIU.pdf
- Orr W. David. 2002. *The Nature of Design*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schafersman, D. Steven. 1991. *An Introduction to Critical Thinking*. Retrieved on <http://facultycenter.ischool.syr.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Critical-Thinking.pdf>
- Willis, Jane. 1996. *A Framework for Task-Based Learning* (Longman Handbooks for Language Teachers). Oxford: Addison Wesley Publishing Company.