STRATEGIES TO MOTIVATE LEARNERS IN WRITING NARRATIVE TEXTS
(AN ACTION RESEARCH AT THE TENTH GRADE LEARNERS
OF SMA N 2 SEMARANG IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2010/2011)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to elaborate teacher’s strategies during teaching learning process to motivate learners and its implication in learners’ narrative texts. This study is an action research in nature by using combination of quantitative and qualitative approach in analysis. There were two subjects of the study. They were the teacher and the learners.

In analyzing the data, the writer conducted two analyses. The first analysis was the analysis and description of the teacher’s strategies used in the teaching learning process by using Turney’s skill observation sheet (1983). The second analysis was the analysis of learners’ questionnaire to find out their learning experience and their conception of the strategies used by the teacher in teaching writing narrative texts, and the analysis and description of the learners’ writing skill from pre-test to post-test by using Brown’s analytic scale (2004: 244). The writer, the teacher, and an expert in English writing subject assessed the learners’ writing. It was done to obtain the objectivity of the assessment and make the study become valid.

The result of the study shows that teacher mostly uses verbal and gestural reinforcement and he sometimes skips some skills proposed by Turney, in fact some of them are crucial in practice. The writer also finds that learners face some problems in writing narrative texts. Most of them have problems in applying the correct tense of narrative, besides they also lack of vocabulary mastery. The result of learners’ writing shows improvement, in which the result of post-writing test (63.5) is higher than the result of pre-writing test (61.5).

Keywords: Teacher’s Strategies, Motivation, Writing Skill, Narrative Text, Action Research

I. Introduction

Teaching English is considered a challenging activity for some teachers since it requires various strategies and activities done by the teachers to make the learners feel excited and ease to learn English. The goal of teaching English is to prepare the learners to have the four skills in English, i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these skills, reading and writing are considered an emphasis in learning English in Indonesia. It is strengthened by the Government Regulation No. 19, 2005, article 25, which notes “language education should develop language competence with special emphasis on reading and writing according to literacy level set up for every level of education.” Indonesian learners find it difficult to write in English, in which they also find it hard to write in their native language. One of the problems faced by Indonesian learners is that they find difficulties in applying English tenses correctly, besides they also have lack of vocabulary mastery. Another problem is that they have no motivation given by the teacher. In fact, the role of the teacher in the classroom is considered one of crucial things in students’ writing skill. The writer chooses this study based on some considerations: (1) English teacher should have appropriate strategies in teaching learning process in order to make the learners comprehend and understand English well, (2) It is assumed that the learners’ motivation in learning English is somehow defined by the strategies used by the teacher in teaching learning process, (3) Among four language skills in English, writing is considered the most difficult skill to learn, and (4) Narrative text is chosen in the study since it is one of genres taught in tenth grade based on the KTSP curriculum, besides some learners cannot write narrative texts orderly.

Regarding the reasons above, the writer proposes some questions related to the topic as follows: (1) To what extent do the strategies used by the teacher motivate learners in writing narrative texts?, (2) What learning experiences do the learners favor in the process of writing narrative texts?, and (3) To what extent do the strategies used by the teacher improve the learners’ ability to write narrative texts?

The objectives of the study are (1) to describe the strategies used by the teacher which motivate learners in writing narrative texts, (2) to describe the learners’ experience in teaching learning process when they are involved in the process of writing narrative text, and (3) to describe the strategies used by the teacher which improve the learners’ ability to write narrative texts.
II. Review of Related Literature

2.1. Teaching Strategy

Turney (1983) suggests six crucial skills that can be applied in English teaching learning process. They merely use in teaching English in general, but they can be applied in teaching writing skill in English also. It can be seen from some skills that are appropriate to help teacher teaches writing skill better. The first skill is reinforcement, which consists of verbal reinforcing, gestural reinforcing, activity reinforcing, proximity reinforcing, contact reinforcing, and token reinforcing. The second skill is basic questioning, which includes structuring, phrasing – clarity and brevity, focusing, re-directing, distributing, pausing, reacting, prompting, and changing the level of cognitive demand. The next skills are variability, explaining, introductory procedures and closure, and advanced questioning.

2.2. Motivation

Abisamra (2002) explains two major factors that affect learners’ motivation, i.e. internal factors and external factors. Internal factors consist of the learners’ gender, goals, need, interest and curiosity, attitude, expectancy, self-efficacy/competence, and their native language proficiency. Teachers, course content and classroom atmosphere, social identity (peer groups), role models, home support, and learning environment are included in external factors. Both factors are important as a consideration in giving and analyzing learners’ motivation.

Ellis (1997: 75) identifies kinds of motivation into four motivations. They are instrumental motivation, integrative motivation, resultative motivation, and intrinsic motivation. Before applying correct strategies in teaching, teacher should know what kind of motivation the learners have, and, in fact, motivation does affect learners’ attitude to learn a language.

2.3. Writing Skill in English Content Standard SMA 2005

The language teaching system used in Indonesia now is KTSP (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan) system, which uses a standard competence and basic competence in every level of education. The standard competence in writing is learners are able to express meaning in a short functional written text and a simple essay in forms of recount, narrative, and procedure texts in daily life context. While the basic competence in writing skill for the tenth grade learners is learners are able to express meaning and rhetoric steps accurately, fluently, and in acceptable manners using written language in daily life context in forms of recount, narrative, and procedure texts.

2.4. Teaching Writing

Teaching writing is done by the teachers in order to improve the learners’ ability to produce any kinds of texts. Richards (2007:22) has been differentiated teaching writing then and now in the countries that use English as their foreign or second language. In teaching writing then, teachers mostly focus on grammar and sentence construction. The focus of teaching English writing has been changed in teaching writing now. In teaching writing now, teachers focus more on composing processes, genres, and effective writing strategies. It can be seen that there is an enormous difference of teaching writing then and now, moreover in the role of teachers.

Harmer (2004: 41) explains some tasks of the teachers in writing process, i.e. demonstrating, motivating and provoking, supporting, responding, and evaluating. From the tasks shown by Harmer, it can be concluded that teacher’s role in teaching learning process is not only as the one who has autonomous authority of the class, but also as the motivator and supporter for the learners by using appropriate strategies in the teaching learning process.

2.5. Narrative Text

Narrative text as one kind of story texts can be considered as a simple text type since it is easily found in our culture, and one event can be narrated in many ways. In Glossary of Education, it explains that “narration differs from exposition, which can also relate a sequence of events, in that narration need not be factual and may be written from the perspective of a character in the text.” The writer defines a narrative text as a text written to entertain the reader and it does not need to be a factual story. Besides, narrative text is one of genres taught in tenth grade based on the curriculum. Fairy tales, myth, and legend are examples of narrative texts that can easily be found in our culture. In getting to know narrative texts well, its social purpose, generic structures, and linguistic features should be emphasized.
The elements of narrative texts can be drawn briefly as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Purpose</th>
<th>To entertain and instruct via reflection on experience. (Hyland, 2004: 29)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Stages         | An Orientation
|                | A Complication
|                | An Evaluation
|                | A Resolution
|                | (A Re-orientation / a Coda) |
|                | It gives information about characters’ situation.
|                | It presents one or more problems for the characters to solve.
|                | It evaluates the major events for the characters.
|                | It sorts out the problems for the characters.
|                | (It is optional in use.) (Hyland, 2004: 33) |
| Language Features | - Specific, often individual participants with defined identifies.  
|                 | - Mainly action verbs (material processes), but also verbal and mental processes.  
|                 | - Normally past tense.  
|                 | - Many linking words to do with time.  
|                 | - Dialogue often included.  
|                 | - Descriptive language chosen to enhance and develop the story by creating images in the reader’s mind.  
|                 | - Can be written in the first person or third person.  
|                 | (Derewianka, 1995: 42) |

2.6. Characteristics of the Tenth Grade Learners

In Indonesia, tenth grade learners are on the age of fifteen or sixteen year old, in which they are in the transitional phase of turning to be young adults or sometimes they are called adolescents. The transitional phase of tenth grade learners is shown by the turning of their attitudes that tend to show more mature attitudes towards others and to solve the problems than doing something in a child-like way. This attitude should be learned by the teachers in order to find the most appropriate way and strategy in teaching the learners. It also helps teachers to find the suitable solution for the problems faced by the tenth grade learners in teaching learning process.

III. Research Method

This study is an action research by using combination of quantitative and qualitative approach in analysis. There were two subjects of the study, i.e. the teacher and the learners.

In doing analysis for the teacher, Turney’s Skill Observation Record was applied. It was used as the analysis of the strategies used by the teacher. In doing analysis for the learners, questionnaires and writing tests were used to know their achievement and improvement in writing narrative texts. Likert Scale was used as the scoring system of questionnaires and Brown’s Analytic Scale was used as the scoring system of writing tests.

The writer asked the teacher and an expert in English writing subject to assess the learners’ writing. It was done in order to maintain the reliability, validity, and objectivity of data analysis.

IV. Results and Discussions

4.1. Strategies Used by the Teacher

4.1.1. Reinforcement

The result is more likely linked to teacher’s way in directing the learners and in reinforcing them. Some reinforcements given to the learners tend to be effective in use, while the others are considered appropriate. Teacher is more likely asking a question to the groups, not to a single learner.

4.1.2. Basic Questioning

It seems that teacher already knows the class condition so he can change the level of cognitive demand of the learners without any effort and he can distribute the materials by using simpler language and rephrasing difficult questions.
4.1.3. Variability
It can be seen that teacher only varies his manner and style of speaking, but he rarely varies the media and activities. It is possible that teacher can use other media and learning activities to help him teach better and to create a better learning condition during teaching learning process.

4.1.4. Explaining
The result of explaining displays the explanation of the material only regards the well-known examples. It does not regard the learners’ characteristics so it does not enhance their vocabulary mastery and their understanding of narrative texts.

4.1.5. Introductory Procedures and Closure
The result shows that teacher mostly skip the components proposed in doing introductory procedures and closures. He never reviews and evaluates the material, so the learners may feel that they do not need to evaluate their own understanding of the material. It seems like it has a bad effect on learners’ achievement of the material.

4.1.6. Advanced Questioning
The result shows that teacher does not do some interactions and variations in varying the level. He only recalls and applies the material, but he does not check learners’ comprehension. In fact, teacher should check their understanding and comprehension on the material.

From the analysis of the six important skills of teacher’s strategies, it can be concluded that teacher actually is a good supporter and responder to the learners. The result shows that teacher follows almost all of the components of the skills in practice, but he sometimes skips some other important components. For instance, he mostly uses verbal and gestural reinforcement in practice, but actually some other components are good to apply along with them. He also never checks learners’ comprehension on the material, but he asks them to write narrative texts. Teacher should view all the skills and components proposed for teaching learning strategies as important parts in making his teaching process go smooth and easy.

4.2. Learners’ Experience in Teaching Learning Process
The result of the learners’ experience showed some results. By comparing the results of questionnaire in Cycle I and Cycle II, there was a difference of the learners’ experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Showing similar score</th>
<th>Showing decreasing score</th>
<th>Showing increasing score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1 Result of Learners’ Questionnaires

It appears that some learners do not feel easy to take new method in teaching narrative texts, but most of them feel good in taking new teaching method. It shows that teacher could motivate learners better by a new teaching method, but he still needs more time to make them get used to the new method.

4.3. Learners’ Ability to Write Narrative Texts
Analysis of learners’ ability to write narrative texts was done by using the result of the learners’ writings, both pre-writing test and post-writing test. The writer asked the learners to write a short narrative text, entitled “Cinderella”, for each writing test. The writer assessed the writing in collaboration with the help of the teacher, Mr. Marwito Rusdi, and an expert in English writing subject, Drs. Suharno, M. Ed. to make the results objective and valid. Brown’s Analytic Scale was used as the scoring system, which consisted of five crucial components, i.e. organization, content, grammar, mechanics, and style.
4.3.1. Organization
Organization of writing consists of introduction, body, and conclusion of the story.

Figure above draws the comparison of learners’ result in organization of the learners’ writing, both in pre-writing test and in post-writing test. From the result above, it is clearly seen that some learners show increasing score for the organization of writing, though some other learners showed some decreasing score in scoring.

4.3.2. Content
Brown defines content as logical development of ideas.

Figure above describes the comparison of learners’ result in content of the learners’ writing, both in pre-writing test and in post-writing test. From the finding, it can be stated that some learners show great increasing score of their logical thinking to create the content of their writing. It appears that the increasing score of the learners’ writing is affected by the strategies used by the teacher and their awareness of creating logical thinking of the story.

4.3.3. Grammar
Grammar is regarded as the important part in writing narrative text; therefore Brown puts it as one of the scoring categories.

Figure 4 displays the learners’ result in grammar of their writing, both in pre-writing test and in post-writing test. From the result, it is seen that some learners get a slight increasing score for the usage of grammar in writing narrative texts. It is a good result in practice since grammar is considered the most difficult part in writing English texts.
4.3.4. Mechanics
Mechanics were considered as the easiest and the most crucial part in writing narrative text. It included spelling and punctuation in writing.

Figure above shows the result of the mechanics of learners’ writing. From the result, it shows that some learners show a slight improvement for the mechanics of writing narrative texts, which means they already put the correct spelling and punctuation in their writings.

4.3.5. Style
Style of writing consisted of vocabulary and quality of expression.

This figure displays the result of style and expressions used by the learners in their pre-writing test and post-writing test. The result implies that some learners show greater improvement for their style in writing. The result should be viewed as a good step in teaching narrative texts to the tenth grade learners. Therefore, teacher should keep his strategy up.

From the analysis of the five crucial components in writing, it can be concluded that learners’ ability to write narrative texts in SMA N 2 Semarang is great, but they need to pay attention on something more details, such as mechanics and style of their expressions. The result of their pre-writing test and post-writing test are not significant in scoring, but there is a slight increasing score, which means they get better in writing narrative texts.

V. Conclusions and Suggestions
Regarding the results of the study, the writer comes into some conclusions. The writer concludes that teacher only uses some strategies proposed by Turney. He sometimes skips other important skills in practice. The writer also finds that teacher mostly uses verbal and gestural reinforcement. He also applies some variability during teaching learning process to attract learners’ attention, in which it is an effective way to motivate learners. Teacher never checks learners’ comprehension on the materials. He does not give any review and evaluation as the last stage of teaching learning process.

The writer also finds that learners face some problems in writing narrative texts. They usually find difficulties in applying the correct tense of narrative text. Vocabulary mastery does affect learners’ writing since some of the learners do not know what suitable term for the word. From those problems faced by the learners, the writer comes into conclusion that learners’ achievement in writing narrative texts shows improvement. It is showed by the result of the post-writing test (63.5) is higher than the result of the pre-writing test (61.5).
From the conclusions above, the writer proposes some suggestions. The writer thinks that it is better for teachers to follow all the strategies proposed by Turney to make teaching learning process go smooth and easy, both for them and the learners and teacher should have a good class management so each learner has the same chance to be involved in the teaching learning process. In teaching narrative texts, teacher can vary his materials and examples so the learners can broaden their vocabulary mastery and improve their writing ability. At last, teacher can use other teaching techniques to help the learners write narrative texts better.

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