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## THE IMPLEMENTATION OF *DICTOGLOSS STORYTELLING* IN IMPROVING 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE STUDENTS' WRITING ABILITY

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*First Received:* 9 January 2017  
*Accepted:* 22 January 2017  
*Final Proof Received:* 22 April 2017  
*Published:* 29 April 2017

### Abstract

This study investigates the implementation of *Dictogloss Storytelling* in the 8<sup>th</sup>-grade English classroom. It aims to see its contribution to the improvement of students' writing performance in writing narrative texts. The study used the experimental study as a quantitative strand. It involved a class consisting of 19 students in the experimental group. The data were obtained from three meetings of the teaching program. Hypothesis testing revealed that the post-test score ( $M = 64.00$ ,  $SD = 10.41$ ) was significantly higher than pre-test score ( $M = 52.95$ ,  $SD = 8.47$ ),  $t(18) = -10.849$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r^2 = .867$  in 2-tailed direction. The effect size was also considered as large ( $r^2 > .25$ ), which indicated that the intervention had a large impact on the students' score. The extent to which the students had significant improvement in their narrative writing is further explored.

**Keywords:** dictogloss; storytelling; writing ability; students' improvement; young adolescents

### INTRODUCTION

Writing is generally recognized as a difficult task for almost of ESL and EFL students (Thonus, 1993:15; Rosa, 2007; Richard and Renandya, 2002, as cited in Lopa, 2012:164). In addition, Levine (1993) explains this phenomenon might occur because both ESL and EFL students who consider writing is difficult, do not know what and how to write, feel lack of vocabulary, fear of criticism, and want to avoid emotional confusion when they are facing a topic and a blank paper.

Based on the basic competence in the junior high school and senior high school curriculum, to facilitate students in mastering writing, one of the accomplishments that should be fulfilled by the students is that they are expected to be able to identify and write past events happened in a narrative text. Thus, narrative writing is chosen as a pedagogical genre in freshmen composition course since it acts as a fundamental genre (Cheng, 2008:5). According to Derewianka (2004:40) as well as Knapp and Watkins (2005:221), narrative continues to be such genre that students 'pick up' and write 'naturally'; since narrative texts serve to tell story, at the same time, entertain and inform the readers by presenting the writer

experience. This genre is characterized as a powerful, emotional, and communicative text which shows the students' ability to use the language in retelling what a person or a group has experienced (Joyce and Feez, 2000).

In accordance with the teaching and learning activities, It is important to consider the age of the participants while the implementation of a teaching technique. People of different ages have different needs, competences and cognitive skill. Children are easier to learn new languages through games while adults understand new languages better through abstraction thoughts. The students involved in this study are junior high school students which categorized into adolescent learners. Adolescents are learners who are categorized from twelve to seventeen years old. While adults are learners whose ages are above sixteen years old (cited in Laksana, 2012, p. 5-6).

Therefore, storytelling seems to be one of the most suitable techniques to be implemented. In relation to the learning activities, storytelling benefits children in many ways; it presents certain literary devices in a demonstrative and memorable way. Children will see and hear the building of plot, characterization, climax, conflict,

conclusion, etc. Without books, children have to understand key points of the plot and character names. Through storytelling, learners are forced to catch the message from the story. They may ask or add information to the story based on their own imagination. This is a really good example of two ways response between audiences (learners) and the storyteller as well to develop learners' communication ability especially in organizing words into meaningful sentences. In this study, students are expected to be able to reconstruct a story that was told by the teacher in the form of written text.

To help students reconstructing the story, another technique namely *dictogloss* was also chosen to be combined with the storytelling. Different from storytelling, *dictogloss* requires note-taking, discussing, and reconstructing.

Since research related to the implementation of *dictogloss storytelling* especially in EFL adolescent context has not been conducted yet, so that this study attempts to investigate the implementation of *Dictogloss Storytelling* to improve 8th-grade students' writing ability.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Dictogloss is an activity where the learners listen to text or story that is spoken; then they will try to reconstruct it in the form of written text. It is supported by Dewi (2014) she said that Dictogloss is a teaching technique which incorporates various activities such as listening, taking notes, discussing, and reconstructing. Furthermore, Dewi (2014) stated, dictogloss is an activity in the classroom where students need to reconstruct a text given by teacher through listening, writing a note of keywords which are then will be used as a base for new construction. The purpose of the activity is to develop writing skills in a meaningful context.

Nunan (2003) explains the steps of dictogloss as follow:

- a. Preparation.
- b. Dictation.
- c. Reconstructing.
- d. Analysis and correction.

Children delight in imagination and fantasy, and they need to enjoy exercising it. Through storytelling, children are personally involved in it as they identify with the characters in the story and try to interpret the narrative and illustration (Mart:2012). Cameron (2001) also adds that story offers full imaginations that can be enjoyed by children from its theme and characters involved in the story.

Besides nurturing imagination, it also motivates students to learn a language. It also enables them to engage in a language learning, including to comprehend the vocabularies of a target language unconsciously and incidentally (Cameron, 2001; Wajnryb, 2003). In a similar vein, Ellis and Brewster (2002, cited in Mart, 2012) believe that the use of story in language teaching allows the teacher to introduce or revise new vocabulary and offers opportunities for more sophisticated sentence constructions and syntax. Winch et al. (2004, cited in Mart, 2012) also claim that through the story, young adolescent learners are able to improve their vocabularies. All those statements agree that story is considered as an appropriate means of teaching language to young adolescent learners. They also support Cameron's (2001) assumption that students' vocabulary competency will double when teachers explain new vocabularies from the story through pictures, verbal explanation, or gesture.

As defined by National Middle School Association (2003), Early Adolescents are those students who are 10 to 15 years old. As stated by Wilson and Horch (2002, p.58), a recent study has shown that the early adolescents' brain goes through a growth spurt just before puberty and then a period of "pruning."

Wilson & Horch (2002) furthermore added, This growth spurt and pruning are most noticeable in the prefrontal cortex, which is the part of the brain where information synthesis takes place. This is also the part of the brain that controls planning, working memory, organization, and mood modulation. This area of the brain does not mature until about 18 years of age. It means that the most intellectual activities given to Early Adolescents, the most opportunity to strengthen the connections in the brain, will

influence learning for the rest of the students' life.

In this study, the students were assigned to write a narrative text. The narrative can be meant as "art" (Abbot, 2009, p.1). Moreover, Abbott (2009, p.1) states that narrative is something we all engage in, artists and non-artists alike. According to Wajnryb (2009, p.20), a narrative is,

"a text, a piece of connected discourse, larger than single sentence, but varying in length from a short text of a few sentence to a complex form containing many selections and sub-selections and also contains some unfolding action, involving change, movement, a process of transition."

In other words, it is "the representation of an event or a series of events" (Abbott, 2009, p.13). There are several aims of the narrative. First, it tells about someone or groups of people (Emilia, 2011, p.92). Second, it is used to explore social value or a moral value (Emilia, 2010, p. 167). The last is it aims "to amuse or entertain reader" (Gerot & Wignell, 1995, p. 1-2), narrative presents in myth, legend, fable, tale, novella, epic, history, tragedy, drama, comedy, mime, painting, stained-glass windows, cinema, comics, news items, conversation.

## METHOD

This study used a quantitative approach; it employed pre-experimental research (Cresswell, 2008) which involved one experimental group. The use of one group experimental research is to investigate the implementation of *dictogloss storytelling* with respect to the students' writing performance. The pre-experimental design is used due to the limitation of time allotment and feasibility of sample selection in this study. Hence, this study used cluster sampling method (Creswell, 2008) in which the group had been established long before the study conducted. It was considered advantageous because it enhanced the naturalness of the settings.

The participants of this study were the eighth-grade students of one private middle school in Bandung in the academic year of

2016/2017. The selection of participants was due to the following reasons. First, they had already studied English in schools. Second, it was possible to carry out the investigation, in which narrative text was introduced in eighth grade. Third, the location of the school is really near to where the researcher lives, so it was easier to conduct the research.

The population contained three classes; 8A, 8B, and 8C, in which consist of 24 students in each class, so the population data showed that there were 72 students of eighth-grade students.

To obtain the data, there were three instruments used in this study. The first instrument was students' writing test in which students were asked to reconstruct a narrative story told to them in the form of written text. The second instrument was a classroom observation done by an external observer. The third instrument was conducting the interview.

The research procedures of this study were designing the lesson plan, administering pre-test, teaching program (intervention), administering post-test, and conducting the interview.

As pre-experimental research, the data analysis involved an analysis of quantitative strand. Quantitative strand involved scoring technique and hypothesis testing using paired sample t-test. Furthermore, the results of the statistical data were elaborated by another data gained from the results of students' writings, classroom observation, and interview.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

One-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov of the non-parametric test was used to assess the normality of distribution of the data. All results were significant at  $p < .05$ . The data of normality distribution test obtained  $p = .200$ . Because  $p > 0.05$ , obtained  $p$  values indicated non-significant results of One-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov of the non-parametric test. Henceforth, the normality of data distribution was assumed.

Furthermore, a paired-sample t-test was conducted to measure the differences between pre-test and post-test. Post-test score ( $M = 52.95$ ,  $SD = 10.41$ ) is significantly higher than score in pre-test ( $M = 52.95$ ,  $SD = 8.47$ ), in  $t(18) = -10.849$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r^2 = .867$ . It means

that post-test score differs significantly from pre-test score. The effect size was also considered as large ( $r^2 > .25$ ), implied that the intervention had a large impact on the students' score. In accordance with the result, it is concluded that null hypothesis was rejected.

Students' text were analyzed based on the stories structures in terms of orientation, complication, and resolution. The text used for the reconstruction assignment was entitled "Can't You Sleep Little Bear?"

Based on the analysis result, most of the students had understood how to begin a story by introducing the characters. However, they did not provide clear information about the time when the story took place in their pre-test writings. Additionally, in their pre-test writings, most of the students wrote one long paragraph containing the whole story from orientation to resolution while there should be several paragraphs to separate one sequence of events to another. Furthermore, readers might feel confused reading the story which in terms of language features, students did not write connectives; they tried to rewrite the story based only on what they remembered without the consideration of how words and sentences are connected to one another. Hence, it indicates that the students memorized the vocabularies, but they did not fully understand the meaning of the sentence and paragraph as a whole. In line with the interview result, four of the participants mentioned that the reason why it is difficult to acquire writing skill is that they did not have enough vocabularies to be arranged and did not know the proper tense to be used in particular kind of text.

In this case, the teacher did not provide students with vocabularies and grammar knowledge yet before conducting the pre-test writing. Students tried to figure out and get the feeling of the story by themselves then wrote it down in the form of narrative writing. However, it is proven the students' had not able to write a narrative text properly. Both in students' pre-test writing and group writing result in the first meeting of the intervention phase did not show significant differences.

The factors identified from the classroom observation during the first meeting of the intervention phase was the classroom was not conducive enough to have a learning activity.

As the students were assigned to form groups, some of the students were actively moving and taking out a piece of paper, while some others did not want to move and find a group. The students were still confused about what they should do in this phase. Students did not pay attention well, and the teacher could not take control of the classroom in this first meeting. In order to gain students' attention, the teacher should be able to manage the classroom well at the next meeting. Therefore, one of the ways to approach good classroom management is by using a more attractive learning media. This is in line with the interview result; the students prefer to learn using story and pictures because it is much more interesting. In addition, students also mentioned that it is easier for them to construct a story using guideline from the keywords that they wrote before they reconstructed the story.

There are some differences shown in the way students write their orientation of the narrative texts in pre-test and post-test, especially in term of language features, the use of time conjunction and past tense. In their pre-test, some students did not write time conjunction such when the story did happen, they wrote straight to the introduction of the participants. However, in their post-test, almost all of the students wrote either *Once upon a time...*, or *One day...* to begin the story with. It indicates that the students have received an understanding that a narrative story has to be started with time conjunction.

Furthermore, students were lack of knowledge in the use of past tense before the implementation of *dictogloss storytelling*, most of the students use the present tense in their narrative texts during pre-test.

In term of complication, from the data gained, it is shown that the students lack vocabularies, and not used to writing dialogues. Therefore, before the implementation of *Dictogloss Storytelling* was conducted, the teacher provided a particular number of verbs to the students and did a brainstorming in order to enhance students' attention to the use of past tense. During the implementation of dictogloss storytelling, a role play and dialogues between teacher and students was also conducted in order to deliver the message that a narrative story needs dialogues in it.

Otherwise, compared to the students' post-test writings, there were significant differences shown especially in the number of vocabularies they wrote. An example was taken from student2 post-test writing result, in the complication part of the story, the student wrote details of significant events happened in the story, the text is also provided by descriptive language to enhance the story, such as *mini-*, *big*, and *biggest*.

In term of resolution, In the original story, the author tells that the big bear brought little bear outside the cave to look at how beautiful the moon shone up there in the night sky. He uses such descriptive language to captivate the readers, let them imagine the beauty of the night at that time.

Referring to the students' pre-test writings, more than half of the students only write in their story that little bear looked at the moon that shone and finally fell asleep. The students barely use descriptive language to describe how the night looked like, or what little bear felt when he was outside the cave, facing his own fear, the darkness. One sample of a student's pre-test writing is cited below. The students write their story ending differently in post-test writing to their pre-test writing. Some of the students write that little bear fell asleep in big bear's arm, few others write that big bear and little bear slept together in big bear's chair, there are also several students who do not tell where the big bear and little bear fell asleep. However, most of the students have stated clear information on how the problem was solved at the end. From the data above, it can be concluded that *dictogloss storytelling* is effective to improve students' writing ability.

## CONCLUSION

Hypothesis testing revealed that post-test score ( $M = 64.00$ ,  $SD = 10.41$ ) is significantly higher than pre-test score ( $M = 52.95$ ,  $SD = 8.47$ ), in  $t(18) = -10.849$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r^2 = .867$  in 2-tailed direction. The effect size is also considered as large ( $r^2 > .25$ ), which indicates that the intervention had a large impact to the students' score. The result was significant at  $p < .05$ . It means that null-hypothesis is rejected.

The analysis of student texts implies that the implementation of dictogloss storytelling leads to the improvement of students' writing performance, not only in terms of score, but

also in terms of its schematic structure, content, and language. Students write narrative schematic structure in a better organization. The content is improved, in which students are able to write detail events in proper order. In terms of the use of language, error in grammar, vocabulary, and spelling, and punctuation does not occur as frequently as in students' pre-test writing. Moreover, the findings of interview demonstrated that the students enjoy learning activities using dictogloss storytelling technique. This technique helps students enrich their vocabulary, and completing the writing task given by the teacher. Furthermore, dictogloss storytelling enables students to actively participate in the learning activities. This is supported by the classroom observation result; it reveals that students were actively giving a response to the characters of the story, they enthusiastically responded to the questions asked by the teacher and showed great participation in groups.

To conclude, both hypothesis and supporting data from students' text analysis, interview, and classroom observation obviously answer the research question proposed, whether the implementation of dictogloss storytelling lead to improvement of students' writing performance. Therefore, it can be said that dictogloss storytelling can help the students to achieve a better score and better writing ability.

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