

DEVELOPING STUDENTS' CRITICAL WRITING SKILLS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BY USING VOCABULARY CHART

Cindy Febilia Valentin¹, Desiani Natalina Muliasari², Winti Ananthia³

Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia Kampus Cibiru

Abstract: *This article is part of a classroom action research. The paper aims to describe how vocabulary chart is implemented in the writing learning process to develop elementary school students' English as a Foreign Language (EFL) critical writing skills. The subject of the study is 28 primary school students grade 3 in one of the public schools in Bandung. The Classroom Action Research was employed in the study. The vocabulary chart was used in a 3-cycle lesson consisting of 9 meetings. This paper focuses on the implementation of vocabulary chart in the first cycle. This research is a qualitative research which used classroom observation, documentation, field note and student interview as the instrument of collecting data. After that the obtained data were discussed and processed to be described, analyzed, and reflected. The data that has been described is then analyzed to get the findings. In conclusion, the application of the vocabulary chart to develop elementary school students' EFL critical writing skill can be implemented in two stages, namely: 1) the vocabulary chart delivery, and 2) the using of vocabulary chart in the students' critical thinking. The study reveals that the vocabulary chart can develop elementary school students' EFL critical writing skills.*

Keyword: *Vocabulary Chart ; Teaching English in Indonesia Elementary School; Critical Writing Skills*

Abstrak: Artikel ini adalah bagian dari penelitian tindakan kelas. Makalah ini bertujuan untuk menggambarkan bagaimana bagan kosakata diimplementasikan dalam proses pembelajaran menulis untuk mengembangkan kemampuan menulis kritis bahasa Inggris siswa sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL). Subyek penelitian adalah 28 siswa sekolah dasar di kelas 3 di salah satu sekolah umum di Bandung. Penelitian Tindakan Kelas digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Bagan kosakata digunakan dalam pelajaran 3-siklus yang terdiri dari 9 pertemuan. Makalah ini berfokus pada penerapan grafik kosakata dalam siklus pertama. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dengan observasi kelas, dokumentasi, catatan lapangan dan wawancara siswa. Setelah itu data didiskusikan dan diproses dengan cara yang dijelaskan, dianalisis, dan dipantulkan. Data yang telah dijelaskan dianalisis untuk melepaskan temuan. Dalam pengiriman grafik kosakata, dan 2) penggunaan grafik kosakata dalam pemikiran kritis siswa. Studi ini mengungkapkan bahwa grafik kosakata dapat mengembangkan keterampilan menulis kritis EFL siswa sekolah dasar.

Kata Kunci: Grafik Kosakata; Pembelajaran bahasa Inggris SD di Indonesia; Keterampilan Menulis Kritis

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, the global competition and collaboration is common things to take place. So already should any individual be prepared as early as possible to optimize the ability to compete in the global era. One of them by optimizing the ability to communicate in writing. Which suggest that the ability to communicate is

fundamental ability for students' in education (Trilling & Fadel, 2009, p. 54). In develop the ability to communicate, ability to think critically is also the important too. The importance of developing critical thinking in children in order to have the sensitivity in response to a problem or whether it is something new in the scope of

¹ SD Laboratorium UPI Kampus Cibiru, Email: cindifebilialia@gmail.com

² UPI Kampus Cibiru, Email: desianinm@upi.edu

³ UPI Kampus Cibiru, Email: winti@upi.edu

the surrounding environment (Desmita, 2010, p. 162).

In this discussion, learning English aims to develop critical writing skills. English is dominant language of communication in various fields, such as politics, medical science, agriculture, science and communication (Sukarni, 2012, p. 3). In addition Crystal (2003, p. 6) and Harmer (2007, p. 11) suggest one to have English language competence to participate in the global community since a quarter of the world population is fluent in English. Teaching and learning English at the elementary school level is based on the Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia Nomor 79 Tahun 2014 tentang Muatan Lokal Kurikulum 2013 pasal 4 on local content that can be applied to every educational unit, one of which is language learning. Meanwhile, Pinter (2006) asserted that new language learning will be very easily absorbed by elementary school students' because elementary school students' have the flexibility to learn a language since they are still in the golden age period (Brewster, Ellis & Gurrard, 2002).

More often, writing activity is not integrated with the development of the students' critical writing skills. In addition, learning writing is generally carried out without the employment of instructional media. So students' critical thinking skills are not developed in the teaching and learning of writing skills. Therefore, the vocabulary chart is chosen as a media to develop students' critical writing skills.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Vocabulary can support a person's language skills because the vocabulary is integrated with English language skills such as reading, writing, speaking and listening. Especially in learning writing, enriching vocabulary will facilitate students in implemented the writing learning. The difficulty in writing is the lack of vocabulary mastery (Linse, 2005, p. 22). In

enriching the vocabulary of students, it is necessary media that can support vocabulary mastery of students. This relates to the opinion of Scott and Ytreberg (2003, p.75) which states that elementary school-aged students' find it difficult to put ideas into the form writing without media that can stimulate students' to get ideas because the characteristics of elementary school students' think concretely. Vocabulary chart is a media development chart presented with vocabulary also features pictures. Vocabulary chart is a media that can improve vocabulary mastery that can develop students' skills (Scott & Ytreberg, 2003).

Lessons of critical writing by using the vocabulary media chart not only teach students' to write vocabulary in English. However, critical writing learning is an activity that inspires students' to think critically and practice writing skills. Freire (cited in Kesuma & Ibrahim, 2016, p. 198) has the term critical consciousness or critical awareness, so that in critical learning the students' do not receive the learning raw but the process of thinking in receiving learning. In the learning of critical writing students' are directed to be able to express their own opinions based on logical thinking in the form of writing. In addition to being able to express opinions, students can be inspired things that may have never been thought of before. Students' did not only know about a particular thing but also understand about it.

RESEARCH METHOD

The paper is written based on an empirical study which adopted a qualitative study. The study being discussed is a part of a bigger classroom action research which was conducted in three cycles. The focus of this article is to describe the first cycles.

This article describes the process of implementing vocabulary chart in the EFL teaching and learning process in Indonesian elementary school context. It also tries to identify the problems faced by both the teacher, as well as the students in using the

vocabulary chart in the teaching and learning process. Those qualitative inquiries addressed by this article makes that the product of this study depicts what the researchers have learned about a phenomenon that is presented in words and pictures rather than in numbers (Merriam, 2002).

The research was conducted in the 3rd grade of an elementary school in Bandung with 28 students (16 male students and 12 female students) in the classroom. The first researcher took the role as the teacher which was organised in the context of teaching training. Thus, the first researcher also acted as the teacher trainee, while the second and third researcher were acted as the supervisors of the training. Together, the researchers collaborated to collect and analyse data systematically to unveil the issue in the field of teaching EFL in the elementary school context, particularly in developing students' critical writing skill through the implementation of vocabulary chart.

Classroom observation, documentation, field note and interview were employed as the data collection methods. The data from the classroom observation were compared with the steps in the lesson plan, which was designed by the teacher beforehand. After that, the steps of the teaching and learning process were depicted into a description. To identify the students' critical thinking skill in using vocabulary chart in the writing activity, data from classroom observation, field note and interview were organised and prepared for the analysis, which resulted into several categories of codes. The last stage of the data analysis was the identification students' critical writing skills the students in implementing vocabulary chart for the critical writing activity in the EFL elementary school context.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

There are stages in learning critical writing with media vocabulary chart that is 1) the vocabulary chart delivery. At this

stage students were shown vocabulary chart, besides the students perform the pre-writing stages with various activities in each learning. Teachers present activities to provide students with initial knowledge; and 2) The using of vocabulary chart in the students' critical thinking. At this stage students were directed to foster the ability to think critically through writing with the vocabulary chart.

Teaching and Learning Process

In this study the teaching and learning process focuses on the using vocabulary chart in teaching and learning critical writing. Researchers used vocabulary chart to inspire students' in carrying out critical writing activities. In each lesson, students' are trained to hone writing skills in terms of spelling and pattern of sentences and develop critical thinking skills in the identification aspect. With vocabulary charts, students are expected to be able to optimize critical writing skills. At one cycle in each teacher's learning using the vocabulary media chart. Each learning cycle has different learning activities.

The learning stages of writing conducted in this study in accordance with the proposed Gebhard (2006, p. 215-218), namely pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing. The stages in the writing learning is an endless process activity. So it is possible when the stages are carried out in sequence. In the first meeting, the pre-writing stage was done with story telling activities. The teacher did the story telling with puppet. After the teacher had had the story telling, the teacher asked some questions to the students about the story. This was in line with the statement of Kalantari and Hashemian (2016) that story telling can be a good input for the development of EFL language. In the second meeting, the pre-writing stage is carried out by conducting the finding picture activity. Teachers presented some pictures on previous learning materials and drawings on learning materials to be randomly executed.

Students' were required to classify the pictures presented by the teacher. While in the third meeting, teacher asked questions to students' about materials in the first and the second meeting.

Next in the drafting, revising, and editing phase of each lesson was to try to write the vocabulary on the available vocabulary chart. After writing the vocabulary on the vocabulary chart, the teacher with the students' corrects the answers that the student had written. Revising stage was done when teachers and students checkedtogether student answers. While the editing stage was when students did some editing to the answers given with teacher guidance.

In each lesson, students worked on the worksheet individually. It was easier for the teacher to know the student's skill. The worksheet given to the students was a worksheet of types of guided written activities. It facilitated students in doing the task (Scott & Ytreberg, 2003). Assessment of learning process in this research was obtained from the students' writing skills in using the appropriate spelling and pattern of sentences as well as students' critical thinking skills in the identification aspect. The assessment of the process was taken from the student's activity through the worksheet that the student has worked on each lesson in each cycle. Student activity in the first and second meeting was arranging a simple sentence with the right modal and writing the target vocabulary with the correct spelling. In addition students were asked to disclose the reasons and identify on each given question. While in the third meeting, students were asked to create a vocabulary chart and compile simple sentences with the right modal and write the target vocabulary with correct spelling.

Critical Writing Skills on Aspect of Identification

Thinking skills to think for thinking called critical thinking should be instilled from an early age so that it can be honed.

Furthermore, Vygotsky (cited in Suyanto, 2009, p. 10) states that everyone can develop his thinking skill when confronted with something new. Critical thinking skills is a skill that can be taught. This is in line with the statement of Winarno and Suprana (2001) which states that thinking skills can be learned. So the ability to think critically can be taught consciously to the students.

In the implementation of learning in each cycle students are trained to identify and provide reasons for the opinions. Any questions given to students are questions with open-ended answers. It is designed to develop students to think critically of something. Teachers can support students' cognitive development by providing open-ended activities or open-ended questions (Piaget , cited in Mooney, 2000, p.73-74). So that worksheet on every learning that measure student identification skill is open-ended question. With the learning that supports students critical thinking, critical thinking skills makes students not accept the learning materials without think deeply (Kesuma & Ibrahim, 2016). So the teacher should give students the opportunity to enable students to identify, analyze the learning materials (Schneider, 2002, p. 1, Carr & Kathryn, 1990, p. 2; Chareka, Leyte, & Mills, cited in Brien, 2013, p. 5). In the implementation of learning students were asked to analyze and put it into writing in the Indonesian language. Although the learning that was carried out is learning English, it was permissible because the researchers did not want to limit student ideas. This was due to the limited mastery of vocabulary students. When students were asked to write an argument analysis it was feared to be limited because of it.

The learning of critical thinking in this study is collaborated with learning writing. Critical thinking skill can be implemented along with learning of writing. Critical thinking skills can be taught in line with the existing curriculum (Donnelly and Linn (2014, pp. 42) & Schneider (2002, p.2). In addition Penner (cited in Komalasari, 2011, p.288) states

that "this critical thinking skill is the same as motor skills, both of them must require practice". This is the reason for the implementation of three meeting in one cycle to provide students with opportunities to practice. But when the researcher examines the results of student activities, there are some students who have the exact same analysis, when researchers do the observation it turns out there are some students who follow the answers of other friends. Students who follow answers from their friends reflect students with low critical thinking skills. Critical writing can be seen when a person can have a different way of thinking from the other (Smith, 2013).

CONCLUSION

The conclusion in this study is the learning process that developing critical writing skills in grade 3 elementary school students' using vocabulary chart is divided into two stages: 1) the vocabulary chart delivery, and 2) the using of the vocabulary chart in the students' critical thinking. From the results of research that has been implemented, the vocabulary chart is used as a media of teaching and learning that can develop critical thinking skills students'. However, in the implementation, there are some obstacles experienced by the students and the teachers. The students have difficulty in interpreting thought into writing. Often the students also find it difficult to understand the English spoken by the teacher. The study also proposes some recommendations. For the teachers, it is recommended to do recasting from the students' first language into English as the target language, apply some rules to manage the classroom, and also prepare the material being used to students' activity. Finally, for the future research, it is recommended to do a research in vocabulary to develop other language skills, such as listening, speaking and reading. Research on the development of the students' critical thinking skills by

implementing other media is also needed to be conducted.

REFERENCE

- Brewster, J., Ellis, G., & Girard, D., (2002). *The primary English teacher's guide*. London: Penguin.
- Brien, L, T. (2013). The development of critical thinking. *Action research: develop critical thinking franklin fierce university*, hlm. 1-16.
- Carr & Kathryn. (1990). How can we teach critical thinking. *ERIC clearinghouse on elementary and early childhood education urbana IL*, hlm. 1-5.
- Crystal, D. (2003). *English is a global language*. UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Desmita. (2010). *Psikologi Perkembangan*. Bandung: Remaja Rosadakarya.
- Donnelly, H. & Linn, J. (2014). Critical thinking skills fire up teaching learning. *Journal of Staff Development is the property of National Staff Development Council*, 35 (2), hlm. 40-44.
- Gebhard, J. G. (2006). *Teaching English as a foreign language or second language: a teacher self-development and methodology guide*. USA: The University of Michigan Press.
- Harmer, J. (2007). *The practice of English language teaching-4th edition*. London: Longman.
- Kalantari, F. & Hashemian, M. (2016). A story-telling approach to teaching English to young EFL Iranian learners. *Canadian Center of Science and Education*, 9 (1), hlm. 221-234.
- Kesuma, D. & Ibrahim, T. (2016). *Struktur fundamental pedagogik*. Bandung: Refika Aditama.
- Komalasari, K. (2011). *Pembelajaran kontekstual konsep dan aplikasi*. Bandung: Refika Aditama.

- Linse, C. T. (2005). *Practical English language teaching young learner*. New York : McGraw Hill.
- Merriam, S. B. (2002). Introduction to qualitative research. In S. B. Merriam (Ed.), *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mooney, C. G. (2000). *Theories of childhood*. Manchester: Readleaf Press.
- Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia. (2014). *Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia Nomor 79 Tahun 2014 tentang Muatan Lokal Kurikulum 2013*. [Online]. Diakses dari luk.staff.ugm.ac.id (27 Maret 2016).
- Pinter, A. (2006). *Teaching young language learner*. New York : Cambridge University Press.
- Schneider, V. (2002). Critical thinking in the elementary classroom: problems and solutions. *Educators publishing service*, hlm. 1-3.
- Scott, A. W. & Ytreberg, H. L. (2003). *Teaching English to children*. New York: Longman.
- Smith, H. C. S. (2013). *Critical Writing*. [Online]. Retrieved from www.eapfoundation.com/writing/critical (21 April 2016).
- Sukarni (2012). *English for Spesific Purposes, Indonesian Spesific Purposes, and Their Pragmatics Implications in Southeast Asia*. Yogyakarta: Ombak.
- Suyanto. (2009). *English for Young Learners*. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara.
- Trilling, B & Fadel, S. (2009). *21st century skills*. America: Jossey Bass A Wiley Imprint.
- Winarno, B. & Suprana, J. (2001). *Terampil berpikir*. Jakarta: Milenia Populer.