

Enhancing Students' Achievement In Writing Text Using Group Investigation Method

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Abstract

Group Investigation (GI) is an organizational approach that allows a class to work actively and collaboratively in small groups and enables students to take an active role in determining their own learning goals and processes. This study is aimed at investigating the implementation of GI to enhance the students' writing ability. This study was conducted by using classroom action research that has two cycles within. The subject of the research was first grade students of English Department UNP Kediri. The instruments of collecting data were quantitative (writing test) and qualitative data (observation sheet, and field notes). Based on the writing test scores, the students' score kept improving in every test. In the pre-liminary study, there were only 43% of the students who passed the minimum standard score. After giving treatment to the students using GI, 91% of the students passed the test in cycle 1 and 100% of the students passed the test in cycle 2. The students can be more active in group work, and they can follow the process of writing well-ordered by implementing the steps of GI. The result of the research showed that GI method could enhance students' achievement in writing instruction text.

Keywords: Classroom action research, Group investigation, Writing

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the most important skills in learning languages besides listening, speaking, and reading. Nunan (2003) states, "Writing was used to show that students had mastered a particular grammatical rule, rather than had a good idea about the subject matter. In fact, correct spelling, grammar, and overall organization were the most important evidence of second language proficiency." It means that the most important evidence of the students was success in learning second language is where they can write in the correct spelling, know its grammar rules, have a good idea, and know the organization of the writing types. In addition, communication can be created in written language. Nunan (2003) states, "Its purpose is both to express and impress." In writing, a writer tries to express

what inside his/her mind and feelings. While writing, the writer often thinks about what the reader will assume. Will the reader understand what is being written in the paper? What is the readers' reaction after reading the written text? Those questions often haunt every writer to build up communication. Concerning this case, it is important to improve the students' ability in writing.

Based on the writing result that the researcher in class, students do not realize that communication can be transferred through writing usually writes without purpose and in disorder way. This case can be seen from the writing result of the students. They only write what is inside their head down on paper. They are not aware of what they need to do in writing, what is their purpose in writing, which word they have to

use in writing and how to arrange those words into coherence sentence.

Further, she found some problems in the field when giving writing materials to the students. The problem was almost fifty percent of the students still got low scores in writing. Then she was motivated to conduct pre-liminary study to know the students' writing ability. She gave tests, distributed questionnaires, and did interviews. The results from the test given by the researcher showed that most of the students get low scores under 75. There were many errors that she found in the students' writing. Mostly the errors are apparent in content, organizations, vocabulary mechanics, and grammar of the text.

Another problem was found from the open-ended interview; it showed that the students had low motivation and were not interested in doing the task since the writing activities were not interesting. Usually, the students are asked to write sentences and paragraphs without being given some clue so that it is difficult for them to express ideas on a piece of paper. To strengthen towards that evidence, the result of the questionnaire showed that 62% students did not like to write English, 57% students stated they have many problems in writing and mostly in grammar, vocabulary and content. Seventy-seven percent of students agreed that the way of their teacher in teaching writing was boring.

From all the evidence above, the researcher presumed that the problem faced by the students arose since the teacher never gave a clear explanation toward what the students had to do to build up their idea when they were doing writing tasks. As consequence,

they often stuck and ran out the idea in the middle of their writing process. The idea may be incomplete, some points are missing, the paragraphs not divided right, and the content is inadequate.

To solve those problems, the researcher was interested in using Group Investigation. This study was concerned with applying Group Investigation in improving students' skill in writing instructions text. Killen in Mabruroh (2011) notifies that students in GI select topics for study, then every group decides what subtopics are to be investigated as well as the goals of their study and then prepare and present a report in front of class. In line with the statement above, Slavin (2005) states that the important point for group investigation is students' cooperative planning of their inquiry. Group members determine what they want to investigate to solve their problem; which resources they require; who will do what; and how they will present their completed project to the class.

Zingaro (2008) notifies that GI includes four important components (the four I's): investigation, interaction, interpretation and intrinsic motivation. These four I's are very useful for both teachers and students in teaching and learning instructions text. In the first "i", investigation the students are forced to investigate a chosen topic. Second "i" for interaction, here the students are learnt cooperatively, they explore and share their ideas in group of students. Next "i" for interpretation where the students are synthesizes and elaborates on their findings of each member to enhance understanding and clarity of ideas. Last "i" is for intrinsic

motivation, GI kindled motivation of the students through group activity.

The researcher believes GI can enhance a significance result in students' writing performance because GI covers four components that assist the writing process of the students: investigation, interaction, interpretation and intrinsic motivation. In investigation the students are forced to investigate a chosen topic, for interaction the students will learn cooperatively, they explore and share their ideas in group of students, for interpretation the students can synthesizes and elaborates on their findings of each member to enhance understanding and clarity of ideas, and intrinsic motivation of the students in writing will arise through group activity.

To strengthen, two researchers, Lestari (2012) and Mayasari (2012) showed that they successfully conducted classroom action research to enhance students' writing achievement using GI. From Lestari's research, she found that the students' score increases from test I (59.42) to test III (76.85). It means that the data showed the students' achievement in writing was improved. Further, from the data that was analyzed by Mayasari from pre-cycle and two cycles, it was found that there was significant improvement in students' ability in writing analytical exposition text after taught using GI method.

Based on the evidence in the field and related research above, authorly convinces to explore and study deeply about the improvement of eleventh year students in their writing of instructions text using GI method. By using GI strategy in teaching instructions

text, it was assumed that students' skill in writing instructions was improved and solve the problem stated above.

RESEARCH METHODS

Design of this research is Classroom Action Research (CAR). CAR is the most applied for those who are concerned in an educational setting, and it is practical design. Action researchers explore a practical problem with an aim toward developing a solution to a problem. Mills in Creswell (2011) believed that action research designs are systematic procedures done by teachers (or other individuals in an educational setting) to gather information about, and subsequently improve, the ways their particular educational setting operates, their teaching, and their student learning.

In addition, Ary (2010) notifies that action research can be used to enhance everyday work practices, to resolve specific problems, and to develop special projects and programs. For further, Hendricks in Ary (2010) states that action research is a powerful tool for studying and improving one's practice.

In this research, the researcher used CAR design because the researcher wanted to resolve the problem appear in first grade students of English Department UNP Kediri. The problem is they had low performance in writing tasks and resolved by conducting teaching writing procedures using GI to enhance the students' writing performance.

The data analysis needs formula and procedure based on research approach or

design of the research. And the writer uses Qualitative and Quantitative Approach.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research found in this research is represented from two cycles. The findings of each cycle can be seen as follows:

Cycle 1

Firstly, the researcher who has a role as teacher announced the result of preliminary test. She told the students' score on the test was not satisfying enough. Here, she brought the students to a clear importance of writing text as a means of communication besides speaking, which can be facilitated through group work. She motivated the students to say that the method would be useful for them. She also introduced the rules of learning writing using GI method. The first cycle was about teaching and learning process and achievement tests. The topic was about instructions for making their favorite food. The test was followed by 43 students. She did research using GI method to improve students' writing performance. The activities on the first cycle as follows:

a. Planning

In this step, the researcher who has a role as teacher started to develop lesson plan for cycle 1, students attendance list, writing material (instruction text), observation sheet, and test. The lesson plan that she developed was about instruction text under topic of "How to Make Your Favorite Food". She was preparing the students to make a group work, power point presentation about instruction text and simple text of "Nice Sandwich Before School". She had planned to begin the

teaching scenario from pre-writing activity, while-writing activity, and post-writing activity. Pre-writing activity is the activity where she prepared the students for the task and made them familiar with the topic. She gave clear explanation about the material, grammatical features, and generic structure of instruction text.

In while-writing activity, the students did the writing process by using GI method starting from topic selection, cooperative planning, implementation, analysis and synthesis, and presentation of final project.

The last step is post-writing activity. Post-writing activity was intended as kind of follow-up activity. In this activity the students' work were evaluated by her whether individual work or even group work. Then she gave the students writing test to measure their progress in learning writing.

b. Implementing

In this activity, the researcher became a teacher, and she was accompanied by her friend as the collaborator. Learning process was begin by greeting, asked students to pray together, checking students' attendance and she gave brainstorming before beginning the material by asking the students "Do you like to eat?", "What is your favorite food?", "Do you know how to make your favorite food?". In this case, the students in class were extremely enthusiastic to start learning the material which can be seen from how interested they are to answer the brainstorming question. After that, she explained about instruction text and the features of the text. She introduced the topic about "How to Make Your Favorite Food"

with the title “Nice Sandwich Before School”. Then, the students were divided into seven groups. Each group consisted of five students based on random system both academically and gender. The students got the text one by one, and then they read the text and identified the generic structure (goal, material, and steps), and the language features of instruction text focus on grammar used. Then each group had the task of investigating one of their favorite foods.

Each group wrote name of food that they investigated, and the paper name of person collected to the teacher. Then, the students of each group found out data about food that they investigated and prepared a report in form of instruction text. After finishing, the students of each group presented their report in the class. During presentation, she helped by the collaborator observe the student’s cooperativeness in group, the students’ activeness in presenting the material, students’ concern toward other group presentations, the students’ activeness in asking questions, and the students’ activeness in answering questions in groups. Then, the students helped by the teacher if they faced the problem.

In the last, the researcher as teacher and her students evaluated each group contribution to the work of the class. After all the process had finished, she evaluated students by giving them a test. After she did the test, she gave suggestions to the students to study hard and increase their vocabulary and learned grammar because vocabulary is the core to build up the idea in writing and grammar has important role in writing a text. Then, she

asked the students to say *hamdalah* together and closed the meeting.

c. Observing

The collaborator observed students in learning process at class by using observation sheets. This observation was done in learning process of using GI method to teach writing at the first grade of English Department of UNP Kediri.

According to the result of the observation in cycle 1 done by the collaborator, it can be concluded that the teaching learning process was bad learning. Although the students had a good behavior toward the teacher’s explanation before teaching began, in the process of learning writing activity the students less focus on group work.

The good points from the teaching learning process noted by the collaborator are first, most of the students are active to answer the researcher as teacher’s question in brainstorming section. Second, most of the students wrote the material they got from her in their book. On the contrary, there was unsatisfied noted from the collaborator and she wrote that some students were confused about what they had to do in their group work and sadly they did not know the process of writing, as consequent they could not manage their time in write the text well and they were run out of the time.

Another finding was based on the students’ post writing test that had been checked and scored by the researcher and her collaborator. In checking or correcting the products of the students’ writing was done in accordance with the scoring guide that has

been agreed between the researcher and the collaborator. Then, the results were placed on the scoring table of the students. The total number of students is 48. The description of the writing post-test result is as follows: 35 students had got scores ≥ 75 or in another word 91% of the students had passed the minimum passing score. On the contrary, 3 students got score < 75 or in another word 9% of the students did not pass the minimum passing standard score. The work of those three students were weak on the development of the idea.

d. Reflecting

At this stage, reflection was done based on the data collected by the researcher and the collaborator. The data resources were the data of the preliminary study, the observation check list, the field notes, and the result of writing products. After deeply and carefully studying and analyzing the data recorded along and after the learning process that applied writing process approach on writing instruction text, there are some items that can be drawn by the researcher assisted by the collaborator.

Based on the collaborator's note, the researcher who has a role as teacher must be more confident and not panic when she faced all the student's which majority is female and basically, they have a high critical thinking. The collaborator had written some points in her field notes to evaluate the teaching and learning writing process done by the researcher, she wrote that:

1) The researcher had to motivate students to be more active in their group activity

- 2) The researcher should manage class well.
Eg: preparing the material needed completely, explaining the material clearly, telling the students how they are going to do the activity, putting the students into groups and controlling the students by going around the whole class.
- 3) The researcher had to prepare materials to make the students become active in group work. Eg: using pictures
- 4) The researcher had to explain clearly what the group work had to be done to get a perfect result

Cycle 2

The researcher as teacher here in cycle 2 begins the lesson by motivating the students and she announced the result of post-writing test. She told the students' score of the test was better than the pre-cycle score. In this meeting, she used pictures to help the students select sub-topics they were interested in discussing, and the teaching learning process ran well. The students paid attention toward her explanation, and they were interested in the topic on the day. They were more cooperative in doing the group work, and they were more active than at the previous meeting. The topic was "How to Make a Useful Handicraft". The test was followed by 43 students. The procedure as follows:

a. Planning

The researcher planned some activities to get maximum result in the second cycle. The planning of the second cycle is not far from first cycle. She arranged the lesson plan for cycle 2, attendance list, observation sheet, writing material and test. In the second cycle,

she used different topics. The topic she taught was about “How to Make a Useful Handicraft”. One point that made the second topic’s preparation different from the first cycle was that she prepared pictures that are appropriate with the material. She downloaded some pictures from search engine about the step of making handicrafts.

In this step, she began with pre-writing activity, while-writing activity, and post-writing activity. Pre-writing activity is the activity where she prepared the students for the task and made them familiar with the topic. She gave clear explanation about the material, grammatical features, and generic structure of instruction text. She explained deeply about the grammatical features in instruction text (simple present tense & imperative sentence) because grammar was being scored in posttest writing aside the content. She trained the students to write simple sentences in simple present tense & imperative.

In while-writing activity, the students did the writing process by using GI method starting from topic selection, cooperative planning, implementation, analysis and synthesis, and presentation of final project. In topic selection, she asked the captain of each group to decide what subtopic they wanted to discuss and investigate by choosing the provided picture.

The last step is post-writing activity. Post-writing activity was intended as kind of follow-up activity. In this activity the students’ work were evaluated by the researcher whether individual work or even the group work. Then she gave the students

writing test to measure their progress in learning writing.

b. Implementing

The activity in this stage was not different from the previous cycle. The researcher became a teacher, and she was accompanied by her friend as the collaborator. The learning process was begun by greeting, ask students to pray together, checking students’ attendances and she gave brainstorming before beginning the material by asking the students “*Do you like to wear it?*” (showed pictures of bracelet, it is handmade) “*Do you ever make it?*”. In this case, all of the students said they were never made bracelets, but they like to wore it to beautify their look. Then, she replied that it is okay if they never made a bracelet by themselves. Next, she asked “*Does anyone here who ever make a handicraft?*”. In this case, there was one student who raised her hand and said that she ever made brooches from flannel and some beads. That student shared her experience of how to make brooches from flannel and got money from it. She got all the students’ eyes and big applause. After the sharing time was over, the researcher that became a teacher introduced the topic about “How to Make a Useful Handicraft” and gave example of text under title “How to Make Bracelet”. Then, the students were divided into seven groups. Each group consists of five people, and the members of the group were still the same as the previous group in cycle 1. Each group got one text then they read the text and identified the generic structure (goal, material, and steps), and the language features of

instruction text focus on grammar used. Then each group got the task of investigating pictures of handicrafts prepared by the researcher.

Each group wrote name of handicraft that they investigated, and the paper name of person collected to the teacher. Then, students of each group found data about handicraft that they investigated and prepared a report in form of instruction text. After finishing, the students of each group presented their report in the class. During presentation, the researcher as teacher accompanied by the collaborator observed the student's cooperativeness in group, the students' activeness in presenting the material, students' concern toward other group presentation, the students' activeness in asking questions, and the students' activeness in answering questions in group. Then, students helped by her if they faced the problem. After all the process had finished, she evaluated students by giving them a test.

In the end, the students and the teacher evaluated each group's contribution to the work of the class. After all the process had finished, she evaluated students by giving them a test. After doing the test, she gave suggestions to the students to study hard and increase their vocabulary and learned grammar because vocabulary is the core to build up the idea in writing and grammar has important role in writing. She explained that they can improve their vocabulary by read and find a difficult word in dictionary, or any other way they are interested in doing. It may be listening to their favorite song, memorizing difficult words, etc. For leaning grammar, they

can practice regularly in their spare time or maybe discuss with friends. Then, she asked students to say *hamdalah* together and closed the meeting.

c. Observing

The collaborator observed students in learning process at class by using observation sheets. This observation was done in learning process of using GI method to teach writing at the first grade of English Department of UNP Kediri.

According to the result of the observation in cycle 2 done by the collaborator, it can be concluded that the teaching learning process was good learning. Students had excellent behavior to teacher's explanation. They paid attention to her instructions and responded to it. The writing process of the students was getting better than previous study. The group work was better since she gave them pictures to help them in building the idea.

Another finding was based on the students' post writing test that had been checked and scored by the researcher and her collaborator. In checking or correcting the products of the students' writing was done in accordance with the scoring guide that has been agreed between the researcher and the collaborator. Then, the results were placed on the scoring table of the students. The total number of students that participated in this test are 43. The description of the writing post-test result is as follows: 43 students had got scores ≥ 75 or in another word 100% of the students had passed the minimum passing score. On the contrary, none of the students got score < 75 or in another word 0% of the

students did not pass the minimum passing standard score. It means all the students successfully passed the test.

d. Reflecting

The result of the second cycle was also considered as implementation. It was better than in first cycle. There was an improvement in this cycle. The condition of the class was getting better. The students listened to the teacher's explanation and did not make noise in learning activity. The students took active part in their group, and they can associate with group members. It was because they were interested in studying with GI method that the teacher never used as teaching method before. In addition, pictures here are used to make the students more interested.

The researcher concluded that the problems have been solving using GI method to teaching English writing ability. The teacher should motivate students to practice regularly in writing a text and motivate the passive students to be brave to express their idea into written text.

CONCLUSION

Refer to the research findings and the discussion of the research, the researcher could draw a conclusion that by implementing the teaching and learning process of writing using GI method, this study was successfully enhance the ability of the first-grade students of English Department UNP Kediri in writing instruction text. In doing this research, she used GI method which was also supported by using pictures.

The goal of this research was attained by having all the students got score ≥ 75 in their

writing products. Another goal that was attained in this research was the students could follow the writing process by implementing the steps of GI which can make their writing products better and get the minimum passing score that had been standardized. In the process of writing, the students (1) break into heterogenous group which consist of four to six member to choose specific subtopics (topic selection), (2) the students in each group plan the learning procedures, tasks and goals connected with the subtopics they have selected (cooperative planning), (3) each group obtain any information from many sources then they gather it, reviewing the subtopic, analyzing and find the conclusion (implementation), (4) analyze and evaluate the information they have get and prepare the summary (analysis and synthesis), (5) each group in the class present their topics studied (presentation of final project), (6) students and the teacher evaluate each group's work (evaluation).

This research was conducted in two cycles. The first cycle did not fulfill the criteria or the requirement of success, so the researcher continued to set the second cycle. The requirement is when all the students have got a score of at least 75 as a minimum passing standard determined or at least 100 % of students have achieved the minimum passing standard score.

In the first cycle, 40 students had got scores ≥ 75 or in another word 91% of the students had passed the minimum passing score. On the contrary, 3 students got score < 75 or in another word 8,9% of the students did not pass the minimum passing standard

score. The work of those three students were weak on the development of the idea.

In the second cycle, the researcher maximized her teaching writing using GI method supported by using pictures. The results is 43 students got scores ≥ 75 or in another word 100% of the students had passed the minimum passing score. On the contrary, none of the students got score < 75 or in another word 0% of the students did not pass the minimum passing standard score. It means all the students successfully passed the test.

From all the evidence that the researcher found in first cycle and second cycle it showed that the implementation of GI method to enhance the writing ability of the eleventh grade was successfully enhanced and it was getting better from first cycle to second cycle.

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