



PROBLEM BASED LEARNING TO IMPROVE STUDENTS WRITING ABILITY

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Article info	ABSTRACT
<p><i>Corresponding Author:</i></p> <p>Jenny Ika Misela  <a href="mailto:jennvikamisela@gmail.com">jennvikamisela@gmail.com</a>  Universitas Wahidiyah</p>	<p>This study is aimed at implementing PBL to improve the students’ writing ability. It was conducted by using classroom action research which has two cycles. Each cycle has 4 steps including planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The instrument used in this research was qualitative and quantitative instrument. Qualitative instruments that she used is observation check list and field notes. The quantitative data was gotten from the students’ score of posttests from cycle 1 and cycle 2. The questionnaire was used in this research as a preliminary study. The subject of the research was the students of tenth grade SMA Wahidiyah Kediri which consist of 29 students. Based on writing test scores, in the pre-liminary study, there were only 4 % of the students who passed the minimum standard score. After that, the score of the students who passed the test in cycle 1 was 13% and 78% of the students passed the test in cycle 2. Based on the observation sheet and field notes, it was found that the learning process of writing runs well. The students could follow the step of PBL orderly begin from (1) clarifying and agreeing on terms and concepts that are unclear, (2) formulating the problem, (3) analyzing the problem, (4) formulating hypothesis, (5) collecting data, (6) evaluating the hypothesis, (7) formulating the recommendation of problem solving. The result of the research shows that PBL method can improve the students writing ability and it is supported by using pictures and outline.</p> <p><i>Keywords: PBL, Writing, Qualitative method, CAR</i></p>
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INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the most important skills in language learning. “Being able to write is vital skill for writers of a foreign language as much for everyone using their own first language”, Harmer (2004:3). Writing is part of the language skills that are important to be taught. In writing, a writer informs an idea and message in the written form. It means that writing is a learning process to be good writers that use good structure. In writing activity, the writer not only thinks of the way to say something and selecting words but also considers how to develop ideas, to combine sentence and to organize paragraph by paragraph.

The process of writing starts from getting ideas up to the last editing, the writer needs good preparation, prior knowledge and experiences accurate before writing. The writing process needs to be considered much because it can help the writer to develop their idea. Students sometime ignored the process in writing. They only write anything inside their head

down in the paper. Consequently, their writing result was conducted in a disorder way, and unstructured. On preliminary study she did in SMA Wahidiyah Kediri it can be seen from test result of daily examination that many students get the low score. Out of 30 students, there any 12 students that get under score of KKM. The researcher conducted the preliminary study to know the students 'writing ability, the researcher used questionnaire and test.

The result of the test shows that there were 15 students who got low scores under 75. From the questionnaire it can be found that the motivation' student was poor in writing ability. The researcher found that the students have low motivation and are not interested in writing activities. To strengthen towards those evidence, questionnaire was given, and it showed that 67% students did not like to write English, 52% students started they have many problems in writing and mostly in grammar, vocabulary and content.

From all the evidence that researchers found above, it is known that the problems arise because the teacher used an old method in teaching writing. The teacher only gives explanations about a certain structure that they are going to learn about and never asks the students to write them in paragraphs. Teacher never gives a clear explanation toward that the students had to build up their idea when they are doing writing task. So, their writing is not complete. This case can stop their motivation of the students in learning English especially in writing.

To solve this problem, the teacher needs to use a new method in teaching writing. The researcher is interested in using problem-based learning to improve the writing ability of the students. According to Barrows & Gijsselaers cited in White (2001:1), "PBL begins with the assumption that learning is an active, integrated, and constructive process influenced by social and contextual factors", It is known that PBL is an active, integrated, and constructive by social and context factors which is helpful for the students in learning writing. At last, the teacher hopes that method can motivate her students to write their need especially in the classroom and in their daily need in general. Therefore, the teacher should be able to present the lesson interesting and create a relevant topic based on the knowledge of the students. So, it can motivate the students and increase their curiosity, particularly in writing skill. It means that the teacher must emphasize the uses of PBL to keep students' interest in writing skill. By using this method, it is expected that the students can learn easier and for teachers' it can ease to monitor and observe the process of writing.

## **METHOD**

The design of this research is Classroom Action Research (CAR). CAR is one of research design that used in classroom or school-based to solve any various problems which used in order to improve the quality of education and solve the problem in learning process. Ary (2010:512) notifies that action research can be used to enhance everyday work practices, to resolve specific problems, and to develop special projects and programs. To strengthen, Tomal (2003:5) states that action research is a systematic process of solving educational problems and making improvements.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Finding**

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

## 1. Cycle 1

The researcher as teacher showed the result of preliminary test. The students' score on the test was not satisfying enough. Then, she motivated the students that the importance of writing text and gave facility through the group work. She introduced the role and PBL learning. The first cycle was about teaching and learning process and ability test. The topic was about classification of animals. The test was followed by 22 students from 35 students. There were 7 students who were absent. The activities on the first cycle as follows:

### a. Planning

The researcher who played a role as a teacher, here started to develop lesson plan for cycle 1, student attendance list, writing material (report text), observation sheet, and test. She used three phase techniques on teaching writing.

Lesson plan was developed as the teaching scenario that the researcher used. When the lesson plan in cycle 1 was not successful then she revised it and developed lesson plan in cycle 2. She planned to revise the media that she used for teaching learning process. She assumed that when in cycle 1 she used pictures, and it was not successful then she planned to make an outline of the report text to help the student in formulating hypothesis.

The material that the researcher chose was about report text. Report text was chosen as its uses present tense which written in the syllabus. The content of the report text was appropriate if implemented by using PBL method. The topic that the researcher chose was "How to Classify Animals".

### b. Acting

The researcher became a teacher, and she was accompanied by her friend as the observer. The learning process start from greeting, asked students to pray together, checking students' attendance.

Students did the writing process by using PBL method started from clarifying and agreeing on terms and concepts that are unclear, formulating the problem, analyzing the problem, formulating hypothesis, collecting data, evaluating the hypothesis, formulating the recommendation of problem solving.

In clarifying and agreeing on terms and concepts that are unclear, the researcher as teacher here stimulated the students by using pictures of any kind animal in the world. She asked the students, "What kind of animal are they?", "Where they live?", "What is their food?". After the students answer the question, she made their concept equal by formulating one problem. The problem that she gave to the students was about "how to classify the animal". Next, the students in each group formulating hypothesis of one problem that they got. Then the students had to collect the data and evaluate the hypothesis. Then, the students had to write their recommendation toward the problem given by the teacher. Unconsciously, the students already classify the animal and write them in the form of report text.

Then the last step is post-writing activity. In this activity the students' work was evaluated by the researcher whether individual work or even the group work. Then she gave the students a writing test to measure their progress in learning writing. The assessment focused on the organization and content of the paragraph.

After the test, the teacher gave suggestions to the students to study hard and increased their vocabulary and learned grammar because vocabulary is the core to build up the idea in writing and grammar has role important in write a text. Then, the teacher closed the meeting.

### c. Observing

In this step, the collaborator observed students in the learning process at class by using an observation sheet. This observation was done in the learning process of using PBL method to teach writing at the tenth grade of SMA Wahidiyah Kediri.

Based on the result of the observation in cycle 1 done by the collaborator can be concluded that the teaching learning process was bad learning. Only a few students who had a good behavior toward the teacher's explanation before teaching began and in the process of learning writing activity the students were confused about what they had to do. Only one group paid attention and followed the instruction well.

The collaborator noted the good point from the teaching and learning process done by the researcher was the group work in doing writing using PBL brought the students became active learners. They can cooperate with their friends in the same group. Pathetically, the active were only discussed with the active one. The passives could not follow the active, then they just kept silent waiting for the active's work.

From 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' writings was done in accordance with the scoring guide that have been agreed between the collaborator and the researcher. Then, the results were placed on the scoring table of the students.

The writing post-test was followed by 22 students from 29. There were 7 students who's absent without any confirmation. The description of the writing post- test result is as follows: 3 students had got scores  $\geq 75$  or in another word 14% of the students had passed the minimum passing score. On the contrary, 19 students got score  $< 75$  or in another word 86% of the students did not pass the minimum passing standard score.

After carefully analyzing the students' work, the researcher knew that it was caused by the content of their writing. Most students who failed in the test wrote descriptive text than report text. They describe in detail the topic given by the researcher. It differed from the researcher's expectation. She wanted their students to classify and describe it in general view.

#### **d. Reflecting**

At this stage, reflection was done based on the data collected by the researcher and the collaborator. The data resources are the data of the observation check list, 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 report text, there are some items that can be drawn by the researcher helped by the collaborator.

The good point from the researcher noted by the collaborator was she could divide the group equally. She knows that the actives should be the leader of the passives. In other hand, she was poor at mastering the material. She was nervous and shaking when explaining the material and gave the instruction to the students in class. Consequently, the students were confused about what they had to do, and their writing result was bad. Then they prefer to write descriptive than report text. It can be seen from the student writing result.

Based on the notes in observing, the researcher as teacher must be clearer in explaining the material. The collaborator written some points in her field notes to evaluate the teaching and learning writing process done by the researcher, she wrote as follows:

- i) The researcher had to motivate students to be more active in their group activity
- ii) The researcher had to prepare material to make the students easy in understanding the difference of report text and descriptive text.

iii)The researcher had to explain clearly about what the group work had to be done to get a perfect result

## **2. Cycle 2**

The teacher began the lesson by motivating the students and she announced the result of the post-writing test. The teacher told the students score of the test was better than the pre-cycle score. In this meeting, she used the same topics to make the students master what report text is about. The test was followed by 24 students. The procedure as follow:

### **a. Planning**

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

What made cycle 1 and cycle 2 different was in cycle 1 she used pictures but in cycle 2 she used pictures and outline of report text. She prepared the outline of the report text to help the students focus on the text that they are studying in. She had already prepared the topic of the text such as Aves, mammals, Pisces, cats, and land animals which still about “How to Classify Animal”. The topic that she used in cycle 1 and cycle 2 was the same because the students had difficulty distinguishing report text and descriptive text. In this step, the teacher began from pre-writing activity, while-writing activity, and post-writing activity.

### **b. Acting**

The activity in this step 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 started by greeting, asking students to pray together, and checking students’ attendance. In this step the researcher reviewed about the material that taught before, by asking “did you still remember about report text?” In this case, only two students who answered that they still remember about it. Next, she asked the students “what is the generic structure of report text?” Then she asked a student to write down the generic structure on the white board. After the student wrote down the generic structure on the whiteboard, the teacher explained more detail about content of generic structure. Still same with first cycle, students seat in their group.

Furthermore, the researcher who has a role as teacher gave outlines about generic structure from some topics for every group. After students got the outline then they started to discuss with their group based on different topic. Next, the students in each group formulating hypothesis of one problem that they got. Then the students had to collect the data and evaluate the hypothesis. Then, the students had to write their recommendation toward the problem given by the teacher. Unconsciously, the students already classified the animals and write them in the form of report text.

During the discussion of their group, the researcher as teacher accompanied by the collaborator observed the student’s cooperativeness in group. Then, students helped by her if they faced the problem. After 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 an important role in writing a text. Finally, she closed the meeting.

### **c. Observing**

The collaborator observed students in the learning process at class by using an observation sheet. This observation was done in the learning process of using PBL method to teach writing at the tenth grade of SMA Wahidiyah Kediri.

Based on the result of the observation in cycle 2 done by the collaborator can be concluded that the teaching learning process was good learning. Students had excellent behavior to teacher's explanation. They paid attention to her instruction 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 an outline to help them in building the idea. It could be seen from students' post writing test that had been checked and scored by the researcher and her collaborator. In checking 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. (See Appendix 10, p.64).

The total of the students that were participate in this test are 23. The description of the writing post-test result is as follows: 18 students had got scores  $\geq 75$  or in another word 78% of the students had passed the minimum passing score. On the contrary, 5 students had got score  $< 75$  or in another word 21% of the students did not pass the minimum passing standard score. It means almost all the students in TKJ 1 class successfully passed the test.

#### **d. Reflecting**

The result of the second cycle was better than in first cycle. There was an improvement in the second 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 were more active in collaborating with their group. It was because they were interested in studying with PBL method that the teacher never used as teaching method before. The outline that was given by the researcher could make it easier for the students to write down a text.

### **Discussion**

In this section the researcher found that the students' writing skill was not good since they could not understand their writing types, what should be in their writing, and how to arrange words. In cycle 1 the students seem confused about what should they write in the paper and when they got the ideas to write a text, the sentence that they arranged was not coherent. They also had poor skills in drafting and revising the text in the process of writing. Regarding the implementation of PBL, Amir M.T (2009: 32) states that the good point in PBL is in formulating the problem then the students had to work in their group to solve the formulating problem they got. In fact, the problem that was formulated by the researcher could not be solved by the students well and the group work of the students did not run well as the researcher expected. But after giving them an outline of report text, then the students more understand toward how to solve the problem formulated by the researcher. On implementing PBL method the group work will run well, and each member of the group know what the problem is and how to solve them.

### **CONCLUSION**

After analyzing the data, the researcher came to conclusion that the teaching and learning process of writing using PBL method has successfully improved the ability of tenth grade students of SMA Wahidiyah Kediri in writing text. In this research students could follow the step of writing process which can make their writing products are better and got

the minimum passing score that had been standardized. The students follow the steps of PBL start from: (1) Clarifying and agreeing on terms and concepts that are unclear where the students got the example of report text, (2) formulating the problem which the researcher gave them an explanation about the generic structures of report text and also its language features, (3) analyzing the problem where the students had to analyze the pictures they got in detail, (4) formulating hypothesis which the students had to deliver their hypothesis toward the pictures they got and arrange the correct sentence, (5) collecting data which the students had to find the related information toward their hypothesis they just made from any sources and write them down into paper, (6) evaluating the hypothesis which the students had to evaluate their information and revised it which information should be in and not (revising & editing), and last (7) formulating the recommendation of problem solving where the students had to proposed recommendation toward the pictures they just discuss about.

This research was conducted in two cycles. The first cycle had not fulfilled the criteria or the requirement of success, so the researcher continued to be setting the second cycle. In cycle 1, 22 students had followed the posttest I and only 3 students who passed the minimum standard score or in other word only 13 % of the students passed the test. It was caused by the students who did not understand about the generic structure of report text and how to develop their idea. In cycle 2 the researcher gave an outline about report text and the example of report text. At this stage the test was followed by 23 students and 18 students passed the test or in other word 78% of the students passed the minimum standard score.

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