

Investigating the Use of Games in Writing Class

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to find out whether games improve students' writing ability, to find out whether students perceive the use of games in writing and to find out the challenges faced by teacher when implementing games in writing class. This study is a qualitative study with selected sampling. The instruments for collecting the data were questionnaire, interview, teachers' diary, and students' documents. While, data were in the form of questionnaire form, interview transcript, filed note, and students writing. There are three basics findings as follows (1) games can improve students' writing ability, it concluded that game as media in teaching and learning could improve students writing skill. The process of implementing also gave variations in learning so that the learning would not make the students bore in the class. (2) Students perceive the use of games in writing, students' perceptions told that applying game is one of good technique to improve students writing ability since it could help on generating idea, organizing, recalling vocabulary and grammar usage. (3) The challenges of implementing games indicate that teachers who have used games for teaching viewed challenges of implementing games effectively and current educational system as less inhibiting factors than those who have not used games for teaching.

Keywords: writing, games, learning, teaching.

INTRODUCTION

Language is a very important aspect in life. People all over the world cannot avoid using language. Through language, people can communicate and interact with each other. Language is a means of communication among individuals.

In learning languages, including English, there are four skills which should be learned. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Without neglecting speaking and listening, reading and writing skills are the important skills. Writing is not easy, let alone writing in a foreign language. Because it is not easy, for students, writing is something less desirable. This situation happens because they may not be able to properly express what is on their mind into a sentence. Another factor that influences this is may be because the students are poorly trained.

Based on the conversation with few students at school where the researcher is teaching, they mentioned that writing was difficult. What makes this difficult is because in writing students should transfer their ideas and thought in English. Besides this, the teaching of writing might be too monotonous. However, in the process of writing, students need to feel safe from worries. It means that students should involve their feeling to show their ideas when they are writing. On the others words, every student has his own creativity in making his paper full of inks. This creativity can rise up if the writing class situation is supporting, and the way teachers teach the skill is interesting.

One of the most difficult aspects of teaching a writing class is getting students motivated and excited about writing. One reason that makes students hesitant to write maybe they do not have ideas to write. Students who really care about their grades will complete the writing assignment. For those students who are not motivated by assignments, there has to be another

motivating and entertaining activity which encourage them to write.

From those reasons, the researcher interested in investigating the different way of teaching writing. What it means by the different way is presenting interesting technique since the students are not really motivated in writing class. The technique that becomes the focus of this research is using games to find out whether games improve students' writing ability; students perceive the use of games in writing and the challenges faced by teacher when implementing games in writing class.

The results of the study are expected to give the contribution to students, English teachers, and the researcher. For students, this study is expected to help them improve their ability in writing. For English teachers, this study is expected to get benefits of using game as instructional media and give an insight for the use of different strategy in writing class. Finally, for the researcher, this study is expected to get some theoretical and practical information in teaching and learning processes.

METHOD

This research adopted the principles of qualitative approach. This was because the research attempted to investigate the perceptions of students and challenges faced by students, so the data obtained are in the qualitative form. Qualitative inquiry employs different philosophical assumptions; strategies of inquiry; and methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation (Creswell 2009, 173). A qualitative approach emphasized the qualities of entities, processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency (Denzin and Lincoln 2000, 8).

For collecting data was conducted at SMAN 1 Ciasem. It located at Jalan Margasari 2 Sukamandijaya Subang. The location was very strategic. The environment was quiet and comfortable. The school's infrastructure supports

teaching and learning process. This school had 45 rooms; there were library, laboratory and many rooms for many activities such as teacher's rooms, headmaster's room, scout's room, extracurricular room, class rooms and the likes.

The members of the research were students, and the researcher himself. The students, as the participants of the research, were the students of class X MIA 4 in academic year of 2016/2017 of SMA N 1 Ciasem. The numbers of the students are 36. This research adopted several methods. They were questionnaire, interview, teachers' diary, and students' documents.

Questionnaires thought of as a kind of written interview. The researcher written interview because it helped in gathering the data and it was easily to analyse the data. It carried out face to face, by telephone, or post. Questions had been used to research type a personality (Friedman & Rosenman, 1974), and also to assess life events which may cause stress (Holmes & Rahe, 1967).

Questionnaire provided a relatively cheap, quick, and efficient way of obtaining large amounts of information from a large sample of people. The data collected relatively quickly because the researcher would not need to be present when the questionnaire was completed. This was useful for populations when interviews would be impractical.

From explain above, the researcher used questionnaire to collect the data and to support this research, because by using questionnaire, the researcher investigated the perceptions of students, the influences of games for students' writing skills and the problems they had related with qualitative research as this research. Kvale (1983) defines interview as, "an interview, whose purpose is to gather description of the life-world of the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena". Collecting these descriptions done in several ways, of which face-to-face interviews were the most common.

The advantages used interview in this research are body language and facial expressions were more clearly identified and understood, the researcher could probe for explanations of responses, the researcher allowed for more in-depth data collection and comprehensive understanding used to support the interview.

From mentioned above, the researcher conducted the data by using interview to the students who are involved. The students interviewed after finishing the general writing activity. It used by the researcher to investigate the influences of games for students' writing skills and the problems they had. In this case the researcher interviewed three students based on the categories high, middle, low who were involved in this study. Based on the interview, the researcher hoped could get some information.

The point's interview covered tree questions. Those were about student's feelings, the role of games in writing and the challenges faced by the teacher. Diary studies had attracted attention from researchers who were interested in gathering qualitative data, especially since Bailey (1983), as reviewed in Howell Richardson and Parkinson (1988). Krishnan and Lee (2002) define diaries as first-person observations of experiences that were recorded over a period of time.

This research used the teacher's diary in collecting data, because it used as effective channels of communication between teachers and students. The researcher as a teacher used teacher's diary in every meeting wrote every important activity in the class. It was useful for researcher itself. Teacher's diary discovered among other things, what students did in the class, how they felt in terms of learning-related anxiety, and what they remember from their class (Howell Richardson and Parkinson, 1988). Therefore, this method related with this research, because the researcher needed the data to support this research. Document analysis was often used in combination with other qualitative

research methods as a means of triangulation. Denzin (1970) states that the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon. In this method, the researcher collected students' documents as the data. The students' documents here were the students' reflective general writing. From this method, the researcher was easily to get the data, and the data was real to show the students' ability. It collected from the first meeting until the end of the research.

RESULT

In improving the process of teaching and learning, the researcher had tried to apply some games in the classroom activities to cater a wide range individual learning style. Those games were as one of the techniques used by the researcher. Games were encouraging students because they were highly entertaining and exciting; they could be used to give practice in all language skills and to improve students' interaction in the classroom. It is in line with (Prensk, p6), "play has a deep biological evolutionary important function, which has to do specifically with learning". It means that games had role in teaching and learning process, then those games were games designed to teach students about specific subject or to develop a specific skill.

In general, during the observation of teaching and learning process in the classroom, before implementing games as one of the techniques, the students were not active and enthusiast in the class, especially in writing class. When the researcher asked students to write a text, they did not have motivation to finish the assignment, most of them thought that writing was difficult for them. In other words, they could not finish their assignment on time. They also looked to be lazy to do the assignment individually, so they decided to cheat to their friend or copy-paste from the internet.

In contrast, after implementing games as one of the techniques, it could be seen that the students did not only have fun

playing the game but they also learned. It could be seen from activities that were done well and the submitted assignment showed that they had understood more.

While the process of games improving their writing skill was steps by steps, most of the students had lack of vocabulary as their basic problems then they learned English using games they felt motivated, after that they had power to learn vocabulary more, after knowing the vocabulary they could write their ideas, and they improve their skill also in writing English by paying attention to the grammatical structure because in those games also applied some grammatical structures.

Furthermore, to see students' progress and comprehending in writing, the researcher gave the students post-test, it was done after eight meetings. It seemed that they had enough confidence to have post-test since they had got enough exercises and experience from the previous activities. The progress could be seen from the first meeting, where the students more active to give the response to each question from the researcher. The score of post-tests could be reported that the highest score was 86, the lowest score was 41, and the average score was 62.

No	Explanation	Score
1.	The highest score	86
2.	The lowest score	41
3.	The average score	62

There were five writing element that were analyzed, they are organization, content, vocabulary, punctuation, and grammar. The result of comparing between pre-test and post-test of the writing assignment can be seen on the table below.

Pre-test and post-test

No	Writing elements	Pre-test	Post-test
1.	Organization	12	15
2.	Content	11	16
3.	Vocabulary	12	18
4.	Punctuations	14	19
5.	Grammar	13	18
	SUM	62	86

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that the students had an improvement on generating idea, organizing, recalling vocabulary and grammar. The findings in this research contribute to the base of knowledge about children's use of online instructional games for foreign language learning, and need more research on this topic, including studies with multiple outcome measures that examine effective game features for learning by different age groups. Those finding almost same with the findings of this research so it could be concluded that game as media in teaching and learning improved student's writing skill.

The students perceive the use of games in writing based on the data from the teacher's diary as the observation tool during the process of implementing games. The condition was under his controlled, it was shown that the students get motivation in learning. The students' feeling while they learned English by implementing games as media was good. It supported by the interview result, it was found that the students had good feeling and comfortable during teaching and learning activities. This feeling made the lesson more alive, and made students interested to learn English.

Based on, students' responses, it really supported that students had changed after they learned by using games. They thought that games improved their vocabulary, made easier to write sentences or paragraph, and made them confident to update their status using English in their social media. Besides, the students joined the class actively. It could be proven from the teacher note that in the last meeting. As usual, the researcher walked around the class and asked whether they had finished their assignment or not. And most of the students answer that they had finished the assignment on time.

In addition, the atmosphere was more alive and the students were active and enthusiast in teaching and learning activities. This condition could be seen when the students active to ask something

new that they did not understand yet and enthusiast to answer all the questions given by the researcher. Then, the important thing that the students did not bored and enjoys the class. It was shown when the researcher asked them whether they were happy with games. Some students said that they liked and enjoyed those games very much, and they wanted to apply games again in learning English.

Furthermore, the data from observation shown that the students were actively engaged in producing the target language. Based on those finding on observation, writing assessment, and questionnaires the result of the study shows some positive responses towards the implementation of games in writing class because the students felt that the activities motivated them to be more active in answering the question from the teacher and accomplishing the tasks. Therefore, it also reveals that most of the students were interested, motivated, and happy in teaching learning process. This finding was related to the finding of the previous study which was conducted by Dzulfikri (2016), the findings in this research showed that the participants perceive that game positively and it affects the players' vocabulary retention positively as indicated by their test results.

In conclusion, the students' ability in writing text improved by using games. It could be said that applying game is one of good technique to improve students writing ability since it could help on generating idea, organizing, recalling vocabulary and grammar usage. Teaching English as a foreign language is a challenging. As a teacher must learn to constantly adapt to students' needs. Many times, this means dealing with a variety of problems in the classroom, many of which are all too common occurrences. While, in this research the challenges faced by teacher during implementing games in writing class. There were differences which raised up in every meeting.

The first meeting, based on the teacher diary it could be seen that students

still less enthusiastic in following the lesson, some students did not like to write when the teacher asked them to write a paragraph, and some students just opened the dictionary in their hand phone. Second, many students did not like to play board game because they did not really understand about that game. After the teacher explained more about that the students had enthusiastic to play with. Third, there were some students who were late to come to school and to collect the assignment. Fourth, there were unusual event most students made noisy in the classroom, when the lesson began they could not play well in following circle games because they limited of vocabulary. Besides, less time allocation had been a problem also. Fifth, the material in this session was about proverb and the teacher found that there were some students who did not understand well about that. Then, there several students who permit to go outside and did not follow the lesson. And still some students were late to collect the assignment. Sixth, the teacher had to face up several students who did not like to study in a group so teacher had to explain the advantages of group learning. Need more time to do the instruction while playing information gap games when there is student who got the punishment the others were noisy. Seventh, some students forgot about narrative text so the teacher had to explain first and made time allocation inappropriate. Last meeting, still there was problem because some students did not give contribution to their group.

Based on those phenomenon shown that teacher could not rise up students' motivation in learning so teacher had to try to develop students' interest and motivation. Besides, teacher had to explain more first before giving the instructions. Teacher had to make sure that students had understood all the instruction given. In addition, the teacher had to manage the time allocation. It would make easier to manage the class and to collect the assignment. The important thing teacher also had to make sure about the students vocabulary mastery.

In short, challenges of implementing games effectively include issues about students and teacher interest, student attention, class management, game content and its alignment with learning objectives, game availability, and assessment

The results also indicate that teachers who have used games for teaching viewed challenges of implementing games effectively and current educational system as less inhibiting factors than those who have not used games for teaching. It is understandable that teachers who have used games at least have overcome the barriers at some point and thus are more confident to deal with challenges of implementing games and the existing educational system than those who have not used games.

A good teacher must be able to recognize these common problems, and work to find solutions. Even a small tweak in your teaching methods can help to create a more productive and casual environment for both you and your students.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion of the research, the researcher proposed some conclusions related to the result of the research. Games can improve students' writing ability, the researcher concluded that game as media in teaching and learning could improve students writing skill. Regarding the findings from pre-test and post-test, the implementation of games and the supporting materials were successful in improving students' writing ability. The process of implementing also gave variations in learning so that the learning would not make the students bore in the class.

Students perceive the use of games in writing, students' perceptions about how do they perceive the use of games in writing answered by the interview questions. These questions were classified in three parts, such as: first question about their feelings during learning by implementing games, second question about the role of game to influence the students writing ability after teaching

and learning process, and the third question about their challenges after they learned. So, the students' ability in writing text improved by using games. It could be said that applying game is one of good technique to improve students writing ability since it could help on generating idea, organizing, recalling vocabulary and grammar usage.

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