Improving students' creative writing skill in composing interpersonal text through comic strips in distance learning

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Abstrak

Menulis merupakan salah satu keterampilan yang harus dikuasai oleh siswa sekolah menengah, namun kesulitan penguasaan keterampilan menulis membuat nilai siswa cenderung rendah dan tidak mencapai standar ketuntasan minimal (KKM). Selain itu, hal ini membuat siswa kurang termotivasi dalam mengikuti kegiatan pembelajaran, salah satunya dalam membuat teks interpersonal. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah: 1) untuk meningkatkan keterampilan menulis kreatif siswa kelas XII, khususnya dalam membuat teks interpersonal melalui komik strip; dan 2) meningkatkan motivasi belajar bahasa Inggris siswa kelas XII SMK Negeri 1 Bunga Raya tahun ajaran 2020/2021 dalam pembelajaran jarak jauh. Penelitian tindakan kelas (PTK) ini dilaksanakan dalam dua siklus dimana setiap siklus terdiri dari perencanaan, pelaksanaan, observasi dan refleksi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat peningkatan keterampilan menulis kreatif siswa. Hal ini terlihat dari hasil nilai rata-rata siswa dalam mengerjakan *Post-test* pada siklus II berada di atas nilai KKM. Selain itu, peningkatan penilaian proyek kelompok juga menunjukkan hasil yang sangat signifikan.

Abstract

Writing is one of the skills that high school students should master. However, the difficulty of mastery of writing skills makes students' scores tend to be low and does not reach the minimum standard of mastery (KKM). In addition, this makes students less motivated in participating learning activities, one of which is in making interpersonal texts. The objectives of this research are: 1) to improve twelfth grade students' creative writing skill, especially in making interpersonal texts through comic strips; and 2) increase students' motivation in learning English in distance learning class of the twelfth grades students of Senior Vocational School (SVS) 1 of Bunga Raya in the academic year of 2020/2021. This classroom action research (CAR) was conducted in two cycles by which each cycle consisted of planning, acting, observing and reflection. The result shows that there is an improvement of students' creative writing skill. It can be seen from the result of students' average score in doing the posttest in cycle II was above KKM value. Besides, the improvement of the group project assessment showed a very significant results.

Introduction

Based on the English subject curriculum in high schools, writing skill is one of the competencies that students should be able to master (Alfaki, 2015; Fareed et al., 2016; Fattah, 2015). Moore and Morton (2017) argues that writing is an activity to express ideas through language media. In addition, writing is a productive and expressive activity so that writers must have the ability to use vocabulary, writing grammar, and language structures (Arkhipova et al., 2018; Hidayati, 2012). Meanwhile, according to Kent et al (2014); Putri and Rusdiana (2017); Tsang et al (2018), writing skill is one of the productive and expressive language skill that is used to communicate indirectly and not face to face with other parties. As long as the researcher teaches at Senior Vocational School (SVS) 1 of Bunga Raya, this skill is considered quite difficult for students where students not only have to master vocabulary, grammar, text structure, and punctuation, but also have interesting story ideas.

The difficulty of mastery of writing skills makes students' scores tend to be low and does not reach the minimum completeness criteria in English lessons. In addition, it makes students less motivated in participating learning activities, one of which is in making interpersonal texts, such as materials about offer and suggestion, telephone conversation, job interview, and so on (Alfaki, 2015; Fareed et al., 2016). It is also a challenge for the researcher to solve these problems where during this covid-19 period, students must carry out distance learning or what is commonly called by distance learning that the teacher's ability to explain writing techniques is also very limited (Efriana, 2021; Sadeghi, 2019). Therefore, a breakthrough is needed for writers so that students are more motivated in composing interpersonal texts, one of which is by making quality teaching materials that are tailored to teaching needs and student characteristics. Thus, teachers must have the creativity to create fun activities during distance learning, such as by using information and communication technology (ICT) in accordance with the characteristics of generation z which can attract students' interest to practice writing intensively.

The low skill and achievement possessed by 12th grade students of SVS 1 of Bunga Raya as well as their lack of motivation in writing interpersonal texts are some problems that must be solved immediately by the researcher that not only acts as a teacher who always teaches materials and theory, but also serves as a teacher who always reflects herself to improve the quality of learning, so as to produce superior generations who are ready to face the industrial revolution 4.0. After analyzing the problems, the researcher took the initiative to create a new, more millennial strategy and adjusted to the teaching needs and characteristics of students, as well as the demands of 21st century learning which uses ICT integrated in learning T (Lin & Md.Yunus, 2012; Tan, 2011). In addition, the researcher is also trying to make the learning activities that more enjoyable and in accordance with the characteristics of 21st century students (Dehghanzadeh et al., 2021; Zaragoza & Fraser, 2017), namely by creating interpersonal text into the form of comic strips (Pursitasari et al., 2019; Zamora et al., 2021). McCloud books on his book entitle "Reinventing Comics" stated that comic is a medium which is arranged to express or the ideas by an images to persuade, amuse and comprehend the readers.

The purposes of this study are (1) to improve 12th grade students' creative writing skill, especially in making interpersonal texts; (2) to increase students' motivation in learning English in distance learning class; and (3) to develop researcher's creativity in applying effective and fun learning techniques and strategies in accordance with the characteristics of students. This research can be used by English teachers as a reference who want to use this strategy to improve students' writing skills in creative ways. Besides, the result of this study can assist in improving

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the quality of teachers' professionalism as educator as well as develop effective, efficient, and fun learning activities which can attract the students being active in distance learning class.

Method

This classroom action research (CAR) is simply a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices and the situations in which the practices are carried out (Lewis, 2009). There are four basic components applied, those are planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. From those components are formed a cycle. The cycle was stopped if the class had the average scores, 75 as the minimum standard of mastery, both in group and individual assignments. The result of the first cycle is used to determine the need for the following cycle, until the problem gets solved by the strategy.

This research was conducted in the first semester, in the academic year 2020/2021. The subjects of this research consist of 13 students of XII grade SVS 1 of Bunga Raya in the academic year 2020/2021, which consisting of six male students and seven female students. This research was carried out based on the internship schedule in first cycle on October 2020. Meanwhile, the second cycle was carried out on November, 2020. This research was held synchronously using web meetings, i.e. Zoom and Google Meet. In addition, the learning was also carried out asynchronously using Edmodo virtual class and WhatsApp Group to facilitate communication between researcher and the students. In getting the data, questionnaire, observation, and test were used. The data used were classified into qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative data was taken from the result of observation and questionnaire, while the quantitative data was taken from the result of the students' test in each cycle.

Results and Discussion

Before the implementation of the action, the students were assigned to do a pretest in making a dialog about interpersonal text. Based on the result of the text, the students obtained an average score 65.53 which is lower than 75, the minimum standard. One of the causes of the low skills of students in writing and student achievement is the lack of motivation to learn from students. It can be seen that students are less enthusiastic in making a dialogue. For this reason, a learning strategy is needed so that students become motivated to make good and correct interpersonal texts. After the implementation of action in the first cycle, the researcher collected and analyzed the data instruments. The result of observation can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. The results of observation in cycle I

Aspects	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Criteria
The activity of the students:	7	53.84	Active
a. Students actively ask the questions			
b. Students actively answer the questions			
Collaboration:	10	76.92	Very active
a. Having a good cooperation			
b. Having a good communication			
Discipline:	12	92.30	Very Active
a. Attending zoom meeting			
b. Coming on time			
Assignment:	9	69.23	Active
a. Responsible in doing individual task			
b. Responsible in doing group project			

In the observation of cycle I, it was found that the students were very active in participation in attending zoom meeting and participation in a group project. The students also were active in answering questions and doing the test. While the data from questionnaire given to the students showed that the students felt interested and enjoyed making a dialog in the form of comic strips. However, only 6 students (46.15%) were able to make a dialog in the form of comic strips as well as satisfied with the result of their projects as seen on Table 2.

Table 2. The results Questionnaire in first cycle

Aspects	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Feel excited about the learning activities	12	92.31
Comprehend the materials well	10	76.92
Able to make a dialog about offering service/help	11	84.62
Love working in group	12	92.31
Interested in making comic strips	12	92.31
Satisfied with the result of the project	10	76.92

However, the result of the Individual test in the final activity found that the average score in making a dialog of interpersonal text about offering service/help was 70.77. There were seven students (53.85%) got success and six students (46.15) were not successful, while the result of the group project showed that only one group (33,33%) got success in making a good comic strip has scored 75, while two other groups (66,67%) were not successful.

Based on the finding, there were still many problems occurred in the research. In the first cycle, students still felt confused because this was their first experience in making dialogue in the form of comic strips (Taskiran, 2021; Zamani, 2016). As a result, only one group could complete their work on time with good content, interesting design, and achieved minimum standard. While the other two groups were late in submitting assignments and also could not achieve the minimum completeness criteria. In addition, students found that it was difficult to get ideas of the story because the theme has been determined by the researcher (Jauk et al., 2013; Maniotes & Kuhlthau, 2014). For these reasons, a slightly different treatment was needed in the next cycle. The researcher planned to give more explanation and examples of the expressions of offering service/help. Besides, each group was given a freedom to determine their own topic in making a comic strips which contained dialog of offering service/help. In other words, some revision were made and then the subsequent improved actions was established to be implemented in the second cycle in order it could improve students' creative skill in writing interpersonal text through comic strips in distance learning class.

Table 3. The results of observation in second cycle

Aspects	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Criteria
The activity of the students:			
a. Students actively ask the questions	8	61.54	Active
b. Students actively answer the questions			
Collaboration:			
a. Having a good cooperation	12	92.31	Very Active
b. Having a good communication			
Discipline:			
a. Attending zoom meeting	13	100	Very active
b. Coming on time			
Assignment:			
a. Responsible in doing individual task	12	92.31	Very active
b. Responsible in doing group project			

After the implementation of the second cycle, the data showed the improvements. The observation of cycle II showed that the students were very active and enjoyed in making interpersonal text through comic strips. The students were also very active in participation in group work as seen in Table 3. Based on the questionnaire given, 10 students (76.92%) comprehended the materials well and satisfied with the result of their project as seen in Table 4.

Table 4. The results Questionnaire in second cycle

Aspects	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Feel excited about the learning activities	12	92.31
Comprehend the materials well	10	76.92
Able to make a dialog about offering service/help	11	84.62
Love working in group	12	92.31
Interested in making comic strips	12	92.31
Satisfied with the result of the project	10	76.92

There were also improvements in the result of post test and group project. In this second cycle, students no longer felt confused about making comic strips because this was their second experience. In addition, the topic of the story was also not determined by the researcher as in the first cycle. This made them more creative as well as more enthusiastic in making an interesting story of interpersonal text about offering service/help. The researcher made a graph to compare the result of pre test before the implementation and post tests and project assessments in the both cycle I and II of the research as seen in Figure 1.
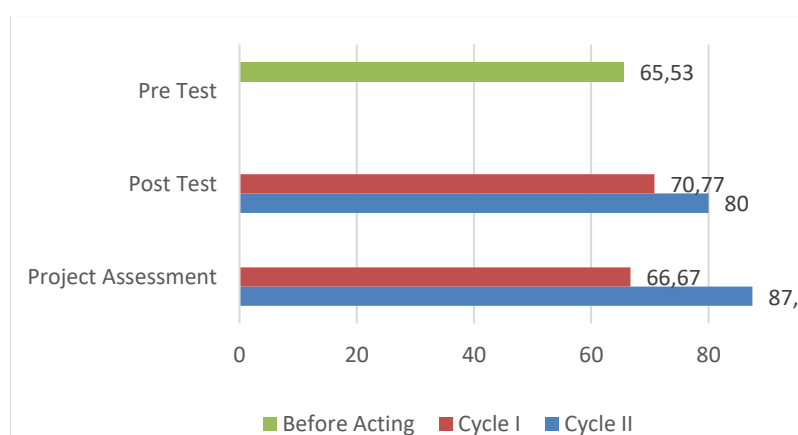

Figure 1. Overall students' average scores

Based on the graph above, the students' average score in doing the post test was 80, there were 10 students (76.92%) get success and three students (23.08%) were not successful. In addition, all of the group had achieved the minimum completeness criteria. The graph also showed that the improvement of the group project assessment was very significant from the cycle I to the cycle II, the increase was 20.83%. The difference among whole results was obviously great. This means that the use of comic strips can improve the students' creative skill in writing interpersonal texts. Thus, the objectives of this study have been success achieved.

Conclusion

As we know, sometimes distance learning will be very boring for students if it is done with ordinary things. Therefore, teacher creativity is needed in creating fun learning that is in accordance with the characteristics of generation z which cannot be separated from the use of smartphones. The use of comic strips as the strategy of the learning at twelfth grade of SVS 1 of Bunga Raya in 2020-2021 academic year made the students active and enthusiastic. They also did not feel bored in the teaching learning process. It can be seen from the data of questionnaire and observation. In addition, the use of comic strips as strategy of the learning can improve students' creative writing skill in composing interpersonal text in distance learning class. This can be seen from the results of student post tests and group project assessments that continue to increase. The average post-test score of students in cycle I was 70.77 In cycle II, it had increased by 9.23% to 80.00. A significant increase also occurred in the results of the student project group assessment. In the first cycle the average was 66.67, while in the second cycle, by changing several actions, the average was 87.50.

Acknowledgement

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