THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THEMATIC PROGRESSION PATTERNS WITH COOPERATIVE LEARNING MODEL (TP-CL) IN IMPROVING WRITING SKILLS

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the effect of Thematic Progression Patterns with Cooperative Learning Method (TP-CL) on the improvement of the students' writing skills and the teaching- learning activities of writing courses. This classroom action research was conducted in the English Department of Magelang Tidar University in the academic year of 2011/2012. The subjects were fourth semester students who took the course of Writing III. To analyze the results of writing tests and the effectiveness of the teaching and learning activities Brown' and Bailey's theory (1984) was used. The results show that the implementation of Thematic Progression Patterns with Cooperative Learning Method (TP-CL) improves the writing skills of the students. In addition, the application of this model can create effective teaching-learning activities. The results suggest that lecturers teaching writing courses should introduce Thematic Progression Patterns to the students in order that they can write paragraphs coherently and organize various themes neatly in order that they can write the paragraph artistically.

Key words: thematic progression, cooperative learning, effective teaching.

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the basic English skills besides listening, speaking and reading. It is a productive skill and it is very important to be mastered by the students of English Department of Tidar University of Magelang. Writing, which is taught in ten credit units and a compulsory subject, is one of the skill courses that provides students with basic knowledge and skill of writing (Swell, 2004, 2005).

Conveying written message through writing is not simple. The students still found difficulties especially in developing a paragraph. It is based on the writer's observation in her writing class in the third semester. Eighty percent of the students were confused in organizing the messages. In this case, some of the students could not develop the following clause from the preceding clause. They did not refer the subject of the following clause from the previous one. As a result, the students cannot write the paragraph coherently. Besides that, some students often repeat the theme of the clause that makes the text/paragraph to be monotonous.

Paragraph organization in a piece of writing is very important. One way to

organize a paragraph is by emphasizing theme and rheme. Halliday (1994:37) defines a theme as the element which serves as point of departure of the message and it is that with which the clause is concerned. The reminder of the message, the part in which theme is developed is called rheme. As a message structure, therefore, a clause consists of a theme accompanied by a rheme and the structure is expressed by the order, whatever is chosen as a theme is put first (Swell, 1990).

Organizing the first elements of clause, i.e. theme, plays an important role in writing and the students must be aware of it. It will show the prominence of the message. In other words, the students' writing will be more cohesive and also the message being conveyed will be easier to be understood by the readers.

As said by Fries (1997: 230-243), both native English speaking and non- native English speaking students have difficulties ordering the words in their sentences. Further, he states that teachers often experience difficulties explaining the students how they should order the information in their sentences. Related to the fact, two concepts are helpful in the task. They are theme and information focus.

In addition, some students could not develop good paragraphs. They could only write three sentences. It was because the students learned the material individually and they did not have good motivation.

Based on my observation, therefore, it could be said that the monotonous techniques (individual work) applied by the lecturers did not make the teaching-learning process effective.

It is often found in the classroom that the instruction is poor because it is not guided by pre-planned curriculum and it is not clear and focused. Also, the learning progress cannot be monitored closely and the class time is not effective because the students do not pay good attention to the lesson.

Among the indicators of effective teaching, the most dominant factors that lead to ineffective teaching learning activity of writing class are when the students do not understand what they are not taught and instructional groups formed in the classroom do not fit with instructional needs. It happens because of the teaching technique applied by the lecturer. The lecturer applies the lecturing and individual technique during teaching-learning process of writing class in pre-cycle stage. Therefore, it can be said that the monotonous techniques (individual work) applied by the lecturers might contribute to this condition.

As stated by Davoudi and Mahinpo (2012), the traditional mode of organization is a teacher-centered one with native speakers sitting in rows facing the teacher, the students spend most of the time repeating and manipulating models provided by the teachers, text book and the tape and develop skills in choral speaking

and repeating are no longer effective. Change is necessary in order for students become creative students in the learning language. It is also supported by Sewell's statement (2002), learning is an active process that allows students the opportunity to construct understanding through empirical investigation and group interaction.

To solve the above problems, in this case to make the teaching-learning activity effective, techniques that make the students active and the teaching-learning activity effective are needed. It is also important to introduce the students the easiest ways to develop coherent paragraphs. One of the ways to make the students easy to develop the paragraph is by introducing Thematic Progression Patterns (Theme-Rheme Negotiation) with Cooperative Learning method (TP-CL).

A cooperative learning method which has various models is considered as a good method in teaching writing. It is because, in cooperative learning there are some learning methods that can be applied in teaching writing that will make the class active; not monotonous. Cooperative learning methods are instructional methods involving small heterogeneous group working together, usually toward a common goal. In learning writing (foreign language), teachers need to help students make connection between foreign language abstract concepts and language concrete concepts. The days of teachers standing in front of class, lecture for 60 minutes and then assigning a text in the language book are no longer effective for today's students.

Based on the above consideration, a classroom action research by implementing thematic progression patterns (theme-rheme negotiation) with cooperative learning method (TP-CL) in teaching writing skill of the English Department students of Tidar University of Magelang is conducted. This article reports the effects of thematic progression patterns with cooperative learning method (TP-CL) on the improvement of the students' writing skill, and on the effectiveness of teaching-learning activities of writing class.

METHODS

This study was a classroom action research with the fourth semester students of B class of English Department of Tidar University of Magelang as the subject of this study. There were three cycles in which each cycle consisted of four stages. Those stages are planning, acting, observing and reflecting. Cycle 1 covered 5 meetings, cycle 2 consisted of 5 and cycle three covered 4 meetings. The cycle one stage was conducted on March, 26th, April 2nd, 9th, 16th, and 23rd. The cycle 2 stage was conducted on April, 30th, May 7th, 14th, 21st and June 4th. The last cycle was cycle three stage. It was conducted in four meetings. They were June, 11th, 16th, 18th and 23rd. In each meeting, it consisted of three parts. They were opening, main activity and closing.

In analyzing the data, descriptive statistics for quantitative data and constant comparative method (CCM) for the qualitative data were used. Constant Comparative method was developed by Glaser and Strauss (1999). This method consisted of four stages: comparing incidents applicable to each category, integrating categories and their properties, delimiting the theory, and writing the theory.

RESULTS

The present study was conducted to investigate the improvement of the students' writing skill and the effectiveness of teaching-learning activity of writing class after implementing thematic progression patterns with cooperative learning in teaching writing. Below are the research findings.

The Improvement of Students' Writing Skill

The first purpose of present study was to investigate the improvement of the students' writing skill after implementing thematic progression patterns with cooperative learning in teaching writing. Based on the stages implemented by the writer in this classroom action research, it can be seen that implementing thematic progression patterns with cooperative learning in teaching paragraph writing can improve the students' writing skills. Based on the process of implementing this model, it can be seen that through thematic

progression patterns, the students can recognize theme-rheme organization applied in each clause or clause complex. Based on the theme or rheme, the students can develop the next clause or clause complexes based on the previous theme or rheme to make the paragraphs coherent.

The focus of the study was on the students' writing skill and based on Brown's theory (Brown, 1987). The research findings would be emphasized on five aspects of writing skill indicators. Based on the results of the data analysis in pre cycle, cycle one, cycle two and cycle three, it can be seen that the implementation of thematic progression patterns with cooperative learning method can improve the students' writing skill of discussion, analytical and hortatory exposition texts.

In each meeting during the action research, there were divided into three parts: opening, main activity and closing. In the opening session, the teacher greeted the students, prayed, motivated the students and had a small talk about experience or previous material. Those activities were done to open the meeting and in order to relate the students' experience with what they were going to learn. In addition to the opening session, the teacher implemented some activities in the main activities. Those activities were the main activities the writer planned to implement in order to improve the students' writing skill. The writer gave the examples

of text, introduced the thematic progression patterns applied in those texts, and asked the students to practice writing the paragraph by applying thematic progression patterns with cooperative learning method. In this case, the students were given one clause or clause complex (sentence). Based on the sentence, the students were asked to develop the following clauses or sentences based on previous ones. They could apply the three patterns; it could be reiteration, zig- zag or multiple theme patterns. In addition to that, in implementing or in introducing the above patterns, the teacher used grouping model. In this case, the teacher applied cooperative learning method. The cooperative learning methods applied by

the teacher were jigsaw, gallery walk, jingle button, index card match, peer correction, and think pair share. To close the activities, the teacher recalled the material, gave the students chance to ask the questions, prayed and said good bye.

The above activities were conducted in order to improve the students' writing skill. In this case, the teacher implemented thematic progression patterns with cooperative learning methods in teaching paragraph writing. Based on the data, it could be seen that the implementation thematic progression with cooperative learning method could improve the students' writing skill. It could be seen from the results of paragraph writing tests that could be seen in Table 1.

Table 1 The Summary of the Average Score

	Average Score of Each Component				
	Organization	Content	Grammar	Punctuation, Spelling and Mechanics	Style and quality of Expression
Pre-cycle	10.85	11.92	10.85	14.19	13.65
Cycle 1	15.62	15.46	14.46	15.69	15.35
Cycle 2	17.31	17.23	15.88	16.96	16.80
Cycle 3	17.53	17.46	16.30	17.15	17.15

Based on the above data, it could be seen that there was some improvement of the students' writing skills after the teacher implemented thematic progression patterns with cooperative learning methods. The improvement was on those five aspects of writing indicators based on Brown's theory. Those are organization, content, grammar, punctuation, spelling and mechanics and

style and quality of expression. In other words, based on the previous explanation, it can be concluded that the implementation of thematic progression patterns with cooperative learning method can improve the students' writing skill.

The Effectiveness of Teaching-Learning Activity

The second purpose of this present study was to investigate the improvement of the effectiveness of teaching learning activities by implementing thematic progression patterns with cooperative learning in teaching paragraph writing. Based on the stages implemented by the teacher in this classroom action research, it can be seen that implementing thematic progression patterns with cooperative learning in teaching paragraph writing can improve the effectiveness of teaching learning activities. Teaching-learning activities of paragraph writing class was effective because it matched with the indicators of effective teaching.

Based on the research data in this case through observation (students and peers' observation) and interview, it can be concluded that the teaching-learning activities of paragraph writing class were effective. One of the indicators was that *the activities were guided by preplanned curriculum*. In this case, through the syllabus and lesson plan designed by the lecturer, she could develop and prioritize learning goals and objectives and organize the materials into lessons. In addition to that, the lecturer could design the sequence of the materials and the sources of the material based on time allotment.

The second indicator found in this research was there are high expectations for students' learning. In this case, the lecturer expected all the students to perform at a level needed to be successful. Based on the research data, it can be seen

that that the lecturer expected the students to be able to write well and correctly based on the rules; based on the indicators set by the lecturer. In this case of course, the requirement related to application of correct grammar was really needed.

In addition, the third indicator found in this research was that students are carefully oriented to lesson. Students' orientation here refers to the students' interest, activities or aims of joining teaching- learning activities of writing class. Based on research data, almost all of the students had high orientation in joining paragraph writing class. They want to be able to write with correct principles. They want to implement these in writing final paper.

The fourth indicator is that the instruction is clear and focused. It was related to how the lecturer gives lectures and demonstration in a clear and focused manner. Based on the data, the lecturer could find that the implementation of thematic progression patterns with cooperative learning method made the instruction is clear and focus. It was because the teaching- learning activities were guided by clear demonstration and instruction either verbally or non verbally. The lecturer reviewed the lesson activities, gave clear written and verbal direction and checked the students' understanding. It is in line with Scheerens and Bosker's opinion (1997). Clarity of presentation is also a consistent correlate of student achievement. Effective teachers are able to

communicate clearly and directly with their students without digression, speaking above students' level of comprehension or using speech patterns that impair the clarity of what is being taught (Smith and Land, 1981).

The fifth indicator was that the learner progress is monitored closely. Based on the data, it can be seen that through this model, the lecturer could monitor the students' learning regularly, reviewed and required that students be accountable for their academic work. In addition to that the development of the students could be monitored through group work.

The sixth indicator was that when the students do not understand, they are taught. Through the model, the lecturer taught the priority lesson contents until students show that they have learned it. Besides, the lecturer would review the concepts to check on and strengthen the students' understanding.

The seventh indicator was class time is used for learning. In this case, the lecturer allocated the time differently based on the level of difficulties. The lecturer maximized the time for instruction and minimized the time for non instruction.

The eighth indicator was there are smooth, efficient classroom routines. Based on the data, it can be seen that the lecturer planned rules and procedures before the class started. She explained rules, disciplines procedures and consequences clearly. Besides, the lecturer always controlled the classroom

condition to make the class smooth and efficient. The use of rules is a powerful, preventive component of classroom organization and management plans.

The ninth indicator was instructional groups formed in the classroom fit with instructional needs. Grouping here is related to how the lecturer makes use of grouping strategies to keep the students achieve the priority objectives and provide in- class instruction in a small group. Paragraph writing class implemented by the lecturer was really effective. Through this model, it helped the students to be active. The students were motivated to finish their job in allocated time and to share their idea in their groups. In this writing class, the lecturer used the whole group instruction when introducing new concepts and skills then formed smaller groups as needed to make sure all students learn thoroughly. In addition to that, the lecturer monitored, reviewed, made use of heterogeneous cooperative learning group and set up peer tutoring and peer evaluation groups to use time effectively. The above statements are in line with Meng's findings (2010). It is stated that interaction in a small groups provides a basis for language acquisition. With learners working in groups or pairs they learn how to read and speak effectively, how to work out what texts mean how to gather important information, how to work well in cooperation with others and how to solve language problems in a systematic way. The students become skilled at

cooperating with others, and express their own opinions, ideas and feelings, guided by the teacher.

The tenth indicator was standards for classroom behavior are high. In this case, the lecturer set standards which were consistent and let students know that there were high standards for behavior in the class, and explained rules, disciplines procedures and consequences clearly. In this writing class, the standards applied by the lecturer are the students could write paragraph coherently, apply the principles of paragraph writing and consider the five aspects of writing assessment.

The eleventh indicator was personal interactions between teachers and students are positive. In this case the lecturer paid to the student interest, problems, encouraged student effort, encourage students to develop a sense of responsibility and self- reliance. In addition to that, the lecturer recognized the students well and did not discriminate the students.

The twelfth indicator was incentives and rewards for students are used to promote excellent. In this writing class, the lecturer provided incentives and rewards appropriate to the developmental level of students, including symbolic and activity rewards such as applause, re-explaining the material that the students did not understand yet. Besides, the lecturer also provided rewards on an individual basis such as score of writing assignments.

The thirteenth indicator was having positive attitude. The positive attitude in teaching-learning activities is really needed. It is because it helps to cope more easily with the activities. It also brings optimism into the students' life and makes it easier to avoid worry and negative thinking. Based on the research data, it was found that there was positive attitude in writing class by implementing thematic progression patterns with cooperative learning methods. The indicators of this are that the lecturer always motivates the students to be creative, have good responsibility, and to develop good attitudes, in this case the students and the lecturer have to be able to be discipline, finishing their assignments on time. Besides that, it can be seen on the grouping model applied by the lecturer in writing class. The students would not depend on the other members of the group. How the lecturer communicated in the class also stimulated the students to have good responsibilities.

The fourteenth indictor was the development of pleasant social psychological climate in the classroom. Classroom climate can be defined as the mood or atmosphere created by a teacher in her/ his classroom; it is also closely related to the way the lecturer interacts with students, and the way the physical environment is set out. That is why pleasant social psychological climate in the classroom is also a key important element in making the teaching- learning activity

effective. After implementing thematic progression patterns with cooperative learning methods in writing class, it can be summed up that there is a pleasant social psychological climate in the classroom of writing class. It can be seen that from the patterns of interaction between the lecturer and the students. The lecturer always paid attention on the students' aptitudes and expectations. Besides that the lecturer always gave the students motivation and there was take and give activity. In addition to that this model make the students enjoyed the teaching learning activities, they cooperated each other to reach the goal and this was active and creative model of teaching- learning activity

The fifteenth indicator was effective time management. Teacher in this case lecturer has a key role in managing the time in teaching- learning activity. She also has to take the role of timekeeper. Based on the research results, it can be seen that there was effective time management in teaching- learning activities of writing class. It is because the time was managed well for each unit or for each material. In addition to that, all of the steps were clear and from the step up to feedback it could be managed well. Besides that the lecturer and the students used the time efficiently. The lecturer gave clear introduction to the material, and applied this through group work and individual test in end of the lesson. Besides, it can be summed up that teaching writing by applying Thematic progression patterns with index card

match, think pair share, jingle button and gallery walk as part of cooperative learning method can make the time management effective. Time management is as an integral part of the classroom procedure and it plays an important role in make teaching- learning effective

The sixteenth indicator was strong lesson structuring. Strong lesson structuring here is related to the way the lecturer arranges or organizes the lesson. In this case the lesson should include varieties of activities. Based on the results, it can be seen that teaching-learning activities of writing class could be arranged well. The steps were clear and could be followed by the students. Besides that, the arrangement of material based on level of difficulties made the teaching- learning process effective. In addition to that the lecturer applied the steps clearly and interestingly. It is also in line with Rosenshine and Steven's opinion (1986). They state that achievement is maximized when teachers not only actively present material but also structure it by beginning with overviews and/ or review of objectives, outlining the content to be covered and signaling transitions between lesson parts, calling attention to the ideas and reviewing main ideas at the end.

The seventeenth indicator was the use of a variety of teaching methods. The variety teaching methods refer to the methods of teaching applied by the lecturer in teaching- learning activities. In this case the lecturer did not only apply one method

but she applied various methods that made the class not monotonous. Based on the research data, it can be concluded that teaching- learning activities of writing class applied various teaching methods and techniques and the use of suitable techniques make students understand the material easily and it was interesting for students. Besides that through various techniques, it would motivate the students to be active and creative.

The eighteenth indicator was using and incorporating pupil ideas. Using and incorporating pupil idea was one of the indicators of effective teaching and learning activities. In this case, the lecturer engages the students in learning. Talking about this, based on the research results, it could be seen that the lecturer of writing class always involved the students in reviewing the students' assignment. There was always a discussion and an experience sharing between the lecturer and the students and among the students.

The nineteenth indicator was using appropriate and varied questioning. Questioning here refers to the way the lecturer uses types of questions in the teaching- learning activities in the classroom. In the classroom settings, teacher questions are defined as instructional cues or stimuli that convey the students the content elements to be learned and directions for what they are to do and how they are to do it. Concerning this questioning, the teaching- learning activities of writing classes used various

model of questioning and they were adjusted based on level of difficulties.

The twentieth indicator was having high expectations of what pupil can achieve. Having high expectation of what pupil can learn is very important element in making the teaching learning activities effective. It is because raising expectations from the teacher can lead to higher achievement. Based on the above results, it can be seen that the lecturer also has high expectations of what pupil can achieve. Both of the lecturer and the students had the same expectation. It was not only the students were able to write coherent paragraphs but also the ability of the students to be creative, responsible and tolerant

In summary, it can be stated that implementing thematic progression patterns with cooperative learning method can make the teaching- learning activities effective. The above research findings were also supported by the results of students and peer observation. The improvement of the effective teaching-learning activity of writing class based on students' and peer observation support the above research finding.

CONCLUSION
Based on the stages implemented by the writer in this classroom action research, it can be concluded that implementing thematic progression patterns with cooperative learning in teaching paragraph writing can improve the students' writing

skill. The implementation of thematic progression patterns with cooperative learning method (TP-CL) in teaching paragraph writing showed improvement on the effectiveness of teaching- learning activity.

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