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Improving Students' Ability to Write Poems Through Scientific Discovery-Based Learning with Nature Pictures from Media

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Abstract

This study aimed: 1) to increase the interest in writing poems; and 2) to improve the ability to write poetry among students in grade VIII. This research was a classroom action research and was conducted between August and November 2016 in class VIII at SMP in Sukoharjo. The techniques used for data collection were observation, in-depth interviews, tests, and document analysis. From the results, it can be concluded that there is an improvement in the students' interest in writing poetry that shown by the fact: 1) in the first cycle, 24 students or 47% joined the teaching and learning process, and this increased to 75% of the students in the second cycle; 2) in the first cycle, writing skills increased to 81% (26 students), which became 96% (31 students) in the second cycle.

Keywords: discovery-based learning, scientific method, writing poem ability

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1. Introduction

Part of the process of learning Bahasa Indonesia in Junior High-grade VIII is learning to write poetry. According to Ollila and Jantas, poetry consists of structured written expressions and is able to describe someone's ideas, expressions, and opinions [1]. Writing poetry is one of the important basic competencies that have to be mastered by students. This view is supported by Mastromattea, who said that poetry is figurative language that can describe the world; furthermore, writing poetry influences people and can enable them to express their ideas [2]. Thomas also suggested an important reason for writing poetry; that is, by writing poetry, someone can describe the content of the world and events that happen in the surroundings and can enable someone to use all kinds of writing [3].

Given the importance and benefits of writing poetry, it is not surprising that it has become a basic competence that has to be taught by teachers and mastered by students. However, in reality, not all students have a great interest in learning to write poetry or in writing itself. As stated by Fisher, individuals only focus on things they have experienced [4]. This means that someone who has an interest in something will do that activity enthusiastically and vice versa, i.e. if someone has no interest he will not obtain maximal benefits from what he has done.

Among the several factors that influence the process of learning to write poetry, apart from student interest, is the learning process itself. An enjoyable learning process will make students feel comfortable during the process, so they can express all their ideas and imaginative thoughts through creative writing. One way of making learning fun is by applying a scientific method: discovery-based learning. According to Budiningsih, the discovery-based learning method involves understanding concepts, meanings, and relations through an intuitive process with a view to drawing a conclusion at the end [5].

Compared to traditional methods, the scientific discovery-based learning method is believed to be more attractive. This is in line with the research conducted by Jong and Joolingen, who found that implementation of the scientific discovery-based learning method compared to traditional methods has a bigger influence on the learning process, so it will facilitate the learning process for students [6].

Enjoyable learning will increase students' motivation to take part in it. Mahmoud said that discovery-based learning can encourage students to improve their learning efficacy [7]. With increased motivation, it is believed that students' skills will also increase. This is in line with Gormally's view that a discovery-based learning method can improve students' ability and self-confidence [8].

Choosing the right learning method can motivate students and make them more active. Balim said that the influence of using discovery-based learning makes students more active and facilitates following the teacher's guidance [9].

Applying discovery-based learning to writing poetry is appropriate because this method requires students to become active in the following learning. As Clarke and Pittaway suggested, the discovery-based learning method implies discovery by students themselves in finding answers to any problems, making it a crucial experience in learning [10].

Besides selecting a teaching method, the media used in the instructional process have a great influence on students' interest and competence. Frederking stated that

media is a neutral movement distribution, which can be used as a tool to deliver information from the sender to the receiver [11].

Among the types of media that can be combined with the scientific method of discovery-based learning is picture series. Permana stated that picture series are appropriate media for teaching writing as they seem to be "silent," but in fact, they move and say something to those who are sensitive and full of imagination [12]. Thus, an instructional process should take place in an interesting and joyful atmosphere, as preferred by students. Therefore, this research concerns the implementation of the scientific method of discovery-based learning in writing poems aimed at revealing whether there is an improvement in the interest and ability in writing poems among eighth-grade students.

2. Methods

This qualitative research employed the strategy of classroom action research (CAR). Kemmis and McTaggart state that an action research is a process of exploration and discovery conducted by an individual or group [13]. It is influenced by changeable plans, major reasons to determine decisions during practice, critical behavior toward information that will direct to development, and evaluation of the results of the applied strategy in daily practice.

Brown and Abernathy add that a classroom action research is a process performed by an individual or group of people that expect a change in a specific situation or certain condition from a test procedure that comes to a conclusion that is accountable and applicable in the implementation [14].

Classroom action research is a practical strategy in which the primary objective is to resolve problems in the daily teaching-learning process with a view to improving quality. Mills notes that an action research is a systematic process of searching and finding conducted by teacher-researchers, principals, counselors, and so forth, in a teaching-learning environment to gather information regarding how teachers can teach best, students can learn better, and schools can operate well [15]. Information is gathered aimed at developing practical values in the school area and students' outcomes. Furthermore, Bogden and Bicklen in Stringer confirm that an action research is a systematic process of collecting information or data planned for social change, whereas Lewin in McNiff states that an action research is a way to bring people toward advancement, by involving them through democratic collaboration and participation [16, 17].

This research involved 32 students, i.e. 16 females and 16 males, from class VIII-A at SMP Negeri 3 Sukoharjo. The research is designed using the model by Kemmis and McTaggart, which consists of: (1) planning; (2) acting; (3) observing; and (4) reflecting [13]. These four actions belong to one cycle and the cycle ends if the determined indicator or success criteria are accomplished. In addition, *Mills* confirms that the steps in action research are viewed as a spiral/cyclical process that includes a general plan, a first action step, monitoring, and evaluation, before further continuing to revision of the general plan, the second step, and the other following steps [15].

The techniques used for data collection are an observation to study the teaching-learning process; interviews to gather opinions from some respondents; a test to discover students' cognitive scores, and document analysis to analyze supporting files.

The data validity is derived from triangulation of the data sources, method, and informants, while the data are analyzed using the techniques of qualitative data (using critical analysis technique) and quantitative data, by comparative descriptive statistics.

3. Results

The column chart of students' accomplishment below shows the students' activeness during the cycle I and cycle II based on observation presented in Figure 1.
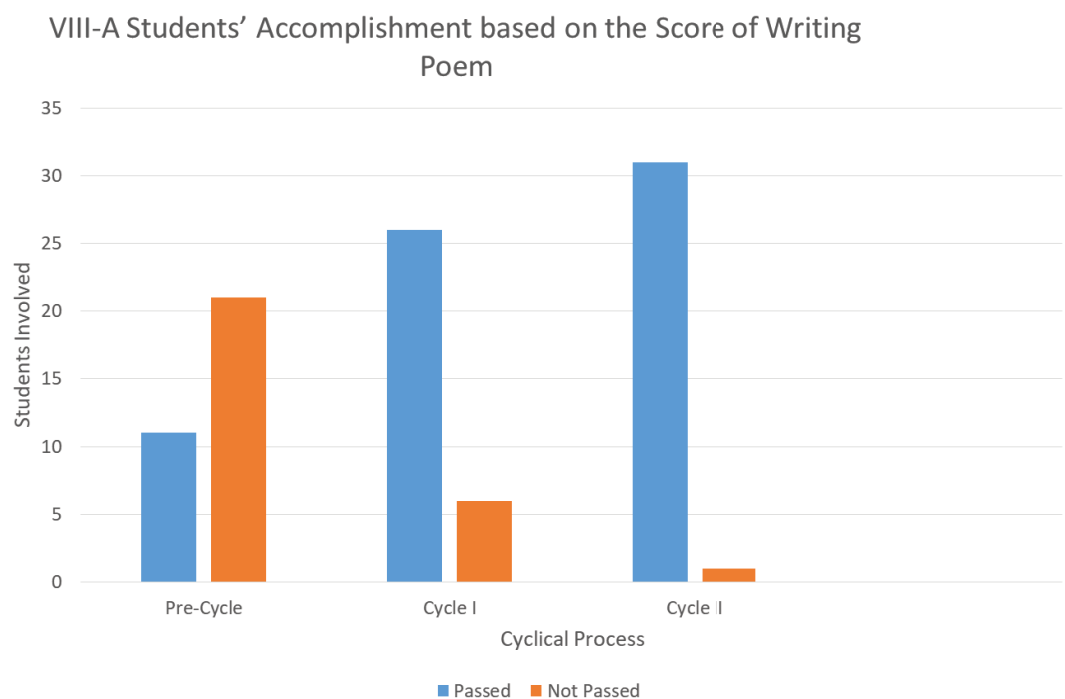

Figure 1: Column chart of students' accomplishment in writing a poem in each cycle.

The scientific method of discovery-based learning is a teaching-learning method presenting a concept or material that is not in the final form or a fixed concept but requires students to identify what they are inquiring about, to gather information on their own, then shape what they understand in a fixed form. Therefore, from that process, they can find a new concept or knowledge.

Discovery-based learning consists of several steps: 1) stimulating the students; this is the step when the teacher presents a picture series in the class; 2) problem statement; in this second step the teacher asks the students to identify pictures they see; 3) data collection; the students gather the data within their group; 4) data processing, in which the students formulate words that will be written as a poem based on the pictures they have observed; 5) verification; at this stage students resort the chosen words; and 6) drawing conclusions/generalization; in this last stage students write a poem from the words they have prepared.

Students' poetry writing ability increased in each cycle that was implemented: In the pre-cycle, there were 11 students or 34% who passed the MMC (Minimum Mastery Criteria); then in cycle I this increased to 26 students or 81% who passed the MMC.

Reflection at the first cycle can be known based on the interviews with teachers and students. The thoroughness of students' poetry writing was still low and did reach the expected target of 85%. Students still had difficulties in choosing the dictions, in applying the figurative language, and in determining the rhymes in the poem they wrote. Therefore, the research was continued in cycle II.

In cycle I at the stage of the problem statement, the students were asked to work in groups to identify the problems in the images. In fact, the students were not able to discuss effectively with their group mates. The students tended to be selfish and less cooperative in identifying problems in the images given by the teachers. Furthermore, at the data collection stage, the students composed their own words that would be made into a poem, which meant that they had not been able to cooperate with their group mates as expected by the teachers. The students only wrote poems individually based on the image that had been displayed by the teacher.

In the second cycle students are heterogeneously grouped together and then the teacher displays the image with a higher degree of difficulty than the picture in cycle I. Furthermore, the teacher was at the stage of the problem statement where the students were asked to write down the problem of each series of pictures shown by the teacher. Thus, the cooperation between students in the group was more intense; moreover, the students are able to arrange the diction in accordance with the theme on the image displayed by the teacher.

The ability to write poetry also increased significantly: In the first cycle, 26 students or 81% passed the MMC, which increased to 31 students or 96%. The percentage of the increase was due to several factors. In cycle II, the learning strategy was more focused on how students communicated and cooperated actively in their group. In addition, in cycle II, the teacher provided poetry writing exercises. Displaying a more difficult image series and giving the students the task of writing out every problem in the images encouraged the students to ask each other and made them discuss with their group mates actively.

4. Conclusion

Based on the above results and description, it can be seen that the students' interest or activeness reached the planned target. According to the results of the cognitive test, it can also be concluded that the thoroughness of students' learning at the end of the cycle also reached the planned target. It can also be said that the classroom action research succeeded if each measured indicator had reached the specified target.

Acknowledgement

Based on the results of the conducted research, it can be concluded that the application of scientific discovery-based learning method can improve the results of students' learning on the basic competence of writing poetry in class VIII-A SMP Negeri 3 Suko-harjo.

Conflict of Interest

Authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in this research.

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