

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WRITING PROCESS IN TEACHING WRITING FOR YOUNG LEARNERS

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ARTICLE

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ABSTRACT

In writing class, young learners need the guidance from the teacher to express their ideas to do the writing task. This study is intended to observe how the teacher implemented the writing process in teaching writing. The implementation of the writing process includes three important things - the techniques, teaching aids, and the teaching procedures. This study was a case study. It was conducted in twelve meetings at Primary 3 Class where the researcher was the non-participant observer so she did not take any participation in the teaching-learning activities. The researcher obtained the data from classroom observations, pictures taking, field notes, and interviews. The results showed that the teacher implemented the writing process in teaching writing by using seven kinds of teaching techniques, eight kinds of teaching aids and different teaching procedures for each technique. The seven techniques were brainstorming, mind mapping, drawing, reading activities, browsing on the internet, pair or group work, and individual writing. The techniques were supported by eight kinds of teaching aids such as storybooks, journal books, whiteboard, workbooks, some stationary items, computers, a laptop, and a LCD projector. The reason for using the techniques, the teaching aids and the procedures were to guide and motivate the students to write better in class. In conclusion, the teaching techniques, teaching aids, and teaching procedures used by the teacher made the students become more active and the students were encouraged to express their ideas in the written work in class

INTRODUCTION

Young learners communicate through oral and written expressions. The oral expressions can be acquired from listening and speaking meanwhile written expressions can be acquired from reading and writing. The four language skills are taught to make the students have the ability to communicate and express ideas with others using the language. Writing takes the crucial part in teaching language, especially for primary students. They

have to start using the writing skill in order to learn the language. As stated by Harmer (2004), writing is a complex process and young children may not always be able to cope with all demands that are made on

them in a writing task. Teaching writing to young learners needs several techniques in order to make it fun and effective. The teacher should be able to build the students' confidence and enthusiasm because writing can be difficult to do if they do not know what to do.

Despite the teaching techniques, teaching aids are needed by the teachers because the materials can help teachers to implement their teaching techniques in the teaching-learning process in class. It is supported by Brown (2001:136) techniques consist of the things you “do” in the classroom, but only a few techniques do not in some manner involve the use of materials to support and enhance them. What would language classes be without books, pictures, charts, realia and technological aids like audiotapes, video, and computers?

A writing process is also needed because writing is used for various purposes which have different forms. Brown (2001:347) says “writing is a composing process and usually requires multiple drafts before an effective product is created, make sure that students are carefully led through appropriate stages in the process of composing”. It is also important to introduce and teach the writing components. The students find it difficult to move from speaking into writing because the mechanical components or writing conventions come into play. Young learners are expected to be able to spell and use punctuation because they have to be able to express their ideas on paper. According to Harmer (2004:44), writing, like any other skills, has its mechanical components. These include handwriting, spelling, punctuation and the construction of well-formed sentences, paragraph, and text.

The researcher is interested to observe the teaching and learning process in this school since this school is a National Plus School that uses English, Chinese, and Bahasa Indonesia as its medium of instruction. The school uses the Singapore curriculum as the main curriculum. Due to the crucial role of the teacher in creating the enjoyable atmosphere of the teaching and learning process, this research is intended to find out how

the teacher implemented the writing process in teaching writing at Merlion School (MS).

REVIEW RELATED TO LITERATURE

The Importance of Teaching Writing to Young Learners

Writing is one of the basic English skills in the process of teaching and learning English. It is supported by Paul (2003:96), "Writing is considered as the most difficult skills compared to the other skills. However, writing can be simpler if the children learn writing in a fun way in class. There are some reasons why it is important for elementary school children to learn to write English from an early stage. One of the reasons is that the children are able to learn the target patterns more deeply. It can be concluded that by learning writing, the children can express their thought and ideas in the written form.

The Role of the Teachers

The role of a teacher in writing class is very important because the children cannot write without any guidance from the teacher. Harmer (2002) highlights that teachers have a crucial task to perform in helping students to become better writers. In other words, the teachers' role has an important part in the writing learning and teaching process in writing class because the teachers can facilitate and encourage the students to write creatively.

The Writing Process

The teacher must be the role model for the children and encourage them to explore their ideas. Spivey (2006) stated that writing instruction occurs in small groups and helps children to be independent writers. Writing process refers to everything that the writer does, from the moment he or she starts to think about what to write until the final copy is completed (Goffman & Berkowitz, 1990). The stages of the writing process include four steps: pre-writing, drafting, revising and editing. It is supported by Linse's theory (2006:105-109) that mentions five stages in the writing process.

- 1. Pre-writing:** the children are prepared to write and collect their ideas.
- 2. Writing:** the children write down all the thoughts in the written form.

3. **Revising:** the teacher helps to examine children's work so that the ideas are logical and flow together.
4. **Editing:** children (with the help of teacher and classmates) proofread their work in order to avoid grammatical and spelling errors.
5. **Publishing:** the writing piece is written in a published form. It can be on a computer or it is displayed on the writing board in the classroom.

The Techniques of Teaching Writing to Young Learners

Teaching writing to young learners seems to be challenging as the teacher must be able to help the students to gain ideas and jot it down on a piece of paper. Several interesting techniques are needed to help the students to cope with difficulty in writing class. In line with this statement, (Brown, 2001) mentioned there are two teaching techniques that can be implemented in teaching writing to young learners:

1. Controlled Techniques

First, this technique allows teachers to pay attention to the topic using verbal or nonverbal related to the lesson by miming, questioning or picture presentation. Second, reading aloud is included in controlled techniques, which means students read directly from a given text. Third, the teachers' role in checking guiding the correction of students' work and providing feedback, Last, recognition is used by the students to identify forms such as drawing symbols, rearranging pictures, etc. Therefore, the controlled techniques above are suitable for teaching writing and easy to follow by both teachers and students.

2. Semi-controlled Techniques

There are some examples of semi-controlled techniques in teaching writing to children. The first one is brainstorming. Brainstorming is a form of preparation for the lesson which is contributed by the teachers and students on a given topic. Secondly, storytelling is a presentation of the story by teacher or students using storybooks, hand puppets or role play. The last one is preparation. It is the activity of student study, especially for silent reading. Thus, brainstorming, storytelling, and preparation are the techniques which provide guidance for children in order to write better.

Writing Activities for Young Learners

Since writing is a boring activity for children, they need some interesting activities in class.

Linse (2006:110-114) stated that there are some attractive writing activities in class:

- 1. Writing models:** good writers are readers and good writers read both fiction and nonfiction. Therefore, the teacher needs to provide reading materials that help students to write better.
- 2. Group writing:** young learners can work collaboratively on a writing project, but it needs to be carefully organized on the part of the teacher.
- 3. Talking and writing box:** another way to learn about children's interest is by having them create a talking and writing box. They use the box to carry items related to their English language class.
- 4. Word walls:** they are lists of words that the children have encountered in their reading and that can be used in their writing.

Krogh (1994) also mentions some interesting writing activities:

- 1. A writing center** is a place for student filled with tools that related to children's age and development. Colored markers can be used as a first writing tool for the students. Paper of different size can be used for greeting cards and it can help to change children's interest.
- 2. Word banks** can be kept for each student in his private envelope. Each envelope has index cards with one favorite or important word written on each.
- 3. Journal writing** allows students to reflect their feelings. It helps the teacher during the first few days especially for writing and reading aloud.

The Writing Conventions

Writing is an idea expressed on paper. It is different from speaking activities because the teacher cannot use facial expressions, gestures, word stress, and intonation in helping them express their ideas. The teacher needs to pay attention to writing conventions: spelling, handwriting, capitalization, and punctuation. The conventions come into play in order to help the teacher in expressing their ideas clearly. As mentioned by Peha (2002:21),

conventions are a powerful part of writing and you can tap into that power with something as simple as a comma or a pair of quotation marks. Your ideas are important. They deserve to be read and to be understood exactly the way you intend. Dixon and Nessel (1983) also noted that it's generally accepted that writing is more difficult than listening, speaking or reading. Producing meaning through writing requires more effort than recognizing meaning through listening and reading. It is also supported by King (2000:29-30), "The writing does naturally involve the pupils in using handwriting or keyboard skills, working out spelling and ordering their ideas". In other words, children should be shown how to write letters in manuscript and how to use common punctuation symbols such as periods, commas, and quotation marks.

The Use of Teaching Aids

Teaching aids play the important role in the teaching and learning process. The teachers need to use some kinds of teaching aids because teaching aids can help the teachers to teach more easily and interesting. It is also supported by Harmer (1991) that teachers need to know what aids are available and appropriate for the level that they are teaching. These may include wall pictures, flashcards, flipcharts, cards, charts, tapes, tape recorders, video playback machines, overhead projectors, computer hardware and software, sets of books and materials and, of course, the board. Harmer (2007) presents several kinds of teaching aids that are useful in the teaching and learning process:

1. **Board:** The teacher and students can use a board for different purposes such as game board, notice board, picture frame, public workbook, explanation aid, and note-pad.
2. **Course books:** The teacher should be aware of when to use a course book lesson. If the materials are not appropriate with the lesson, the teacher can add another activity, for example role play.
3. **Computer and projector:** Anything is on the computer screen can be shown to the whole class using a data projector to put up an enlarged version on a screen or a wall.
4. **Cards:** Cards with different shapes and sizes can be used in a variety of ways. Cards can be well-prepared and also laminated by the teacher.

5. **Pictures:** The pictures should be visible and big enough for the students. The reason is that the students can see every single detail of the picture.
6. **Realia:** It is helpful for teaching the meaning of words or stimulating students' activity. Here, the teacher can use realia when he comes to class such as plastics fruits, animals, two telephones to stimulate conversations.

In addition, Scott & Ytreberg (1990) present various kinds of teaching aids to support the process of teaching and learning in class:

1. **English corner:** it is connected with the English-speaking world and encourages children to take part in English learning.
2. **Puppets:** the example of puppets are hand puppets, finger puppets, bag puppets, and glove puppets. The teacher also can prepare a simple stage to perform dialogues and sketches.
3. **Picture cards:** these can be cut-outs from magazines and drawings,.
4. **Card games:** the card games can be made into language card games. The teacher can make and design by himself.
5. **Word/sentence cards:** words are useful to be displayed using flannel. Sentence cards can also be used for the beginners.
6. **Cardboard shoeboxes:** The teacher can collect shoe boxes or any kinds of boxes to support teaching learning in class. The boxes can be decorated with colored paper.

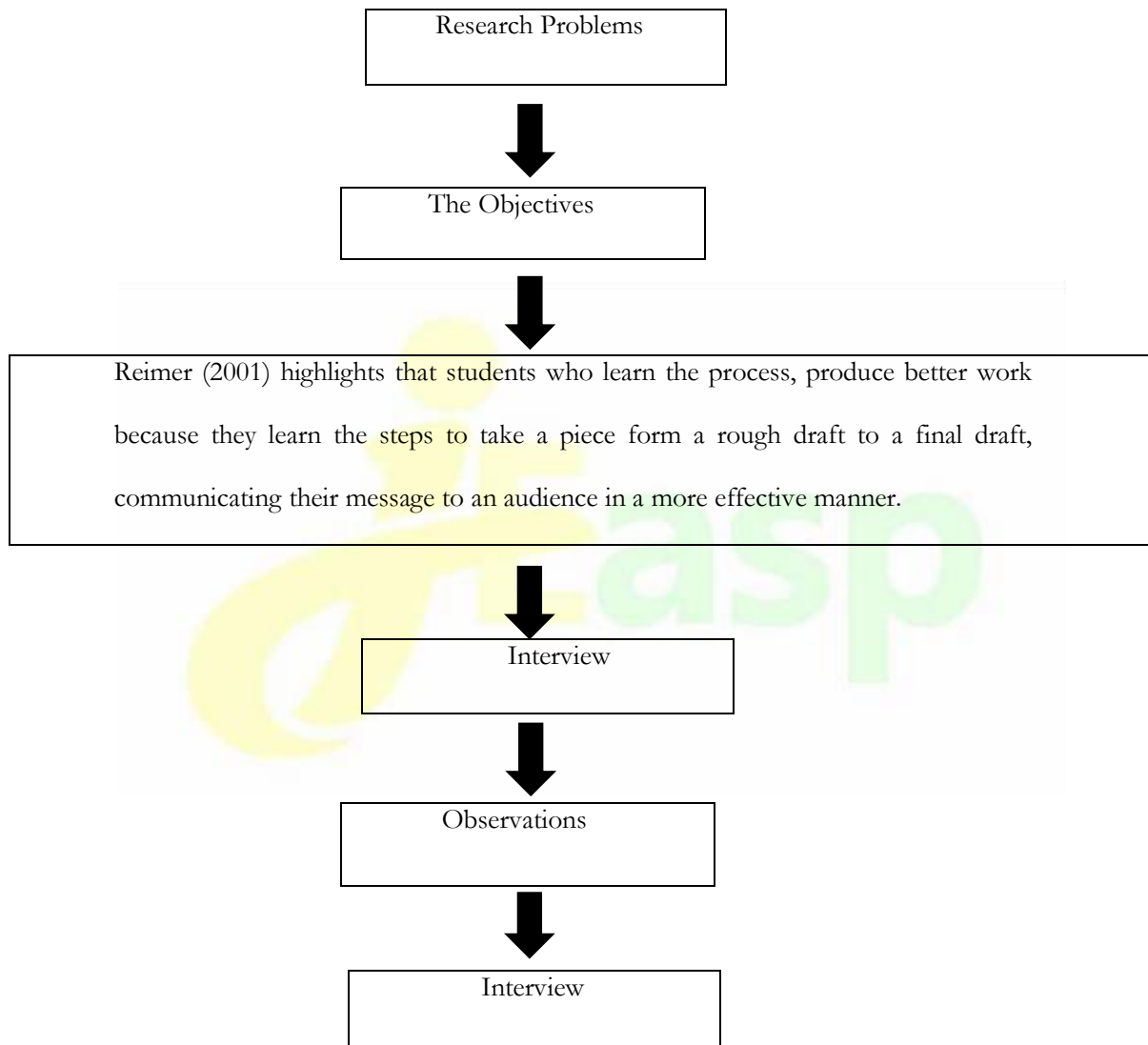
METHODOLOGY

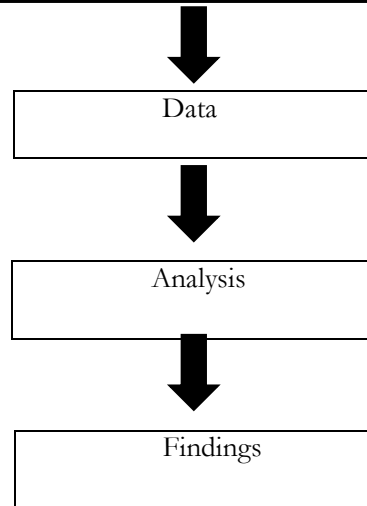
Research Design

In order to gain information concerning the techniques of teaching writing, the teacher used a non-participant observation method. In this research, the researcher observed without participating in English teaching and learning activities. Since the researcher observed the implementation and the process of teaching writing, the researcher was present for the whole sessions of English class. Each session was about 60 minutes.

After observing all the twelve meeting while she was teaching writing, the researcher made some analysis towards the observations. The researcher analyzed the techniques, teaching aids and the procedures used by the teacher.

To give a clear picture of the logical process of this research, the structure of the research design was visualized as follows:





The research was a case study and it was designed to find out the implementation of teaching writing. The researcher used classroom non-participant observation and did an interview before the observation in order to gain general information about the teacher's educational background and the teacher's opinion of teaching writing. Then, the researcher did the classroom observations for twelve meetings. The purpose of doing the pre-observation was to get familiar with the teacher and the students. After the observation, the researcher interviewed the teacher at MS in order to find out the teacher's opinion related to her writing class and the reasons of applying several techniques, procedures and teaching aids in teaching writing. After collecting the data, the researcher analyzed the data by classifying them into three parts: techniques, teaching aids and, procedures.

Setting

The subject of this study was an English teacher of Primary 3 class. She is a female teacher (Mrs. M) who comes from Singapore who is around 35 years old. The teacher taught a Primary 3 class which consists of fifteen students. She graduated from National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological of Singapore. She has been teaching English for nine years. The researcher chose her as her subject of the study because she has been teaching English for young learners for several years.

The Research Instrument

The researcher herself as the key instrument, in this case as a non-participant observer, observed the techniques of teaching writing. Since the researcher was the observer, the researcher sat only in class without participating in the teaching and learning activities. During the observation, the researcher filled out the observation field notes which represented the impression on the teaching process. The field notes represented her single description, covering the teaching activities. The researcher also used picture taking in order to capture the important pictures.

The interview was done for twice. The first was done before the researcher started the observations and the second interview was done after the researcher did the observations.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The techniques that were used by the teacher in teaching writing:

a. Pre-writing stage

1. Brainstorming
2. Mind mapping
3. Drawing
4. Reading activity
5. Browsing on the internet

b. Writing

1. Pair or group work
2. Individual writing

c. Revising and editing

The teacher did not teach the children how to revise or edit.

The teaching aids that were used by the teacher in teaching writing:

1. Prewriting
 - a. Brainstorming, mind mapping

The teacher used a whiteboard for writing while explaining to the students. It was used also during brainstorming and mind mapping from the students.

b. Drawing

The students used journal books for drawing before they wrote a story.

c. Reading activity

Storybooks and short stories were used for storytelling and silent reading.

d. Browsing on the internet

- Computers were used for searching some information
- LCD Projector and Laptop were used for showing what the students should search and how to search the information on the internet

2. Writing

a. Pair or group work

Colorful cardboard and coloring pencils or markers were used by the students for doing the writing activity and decorating their work.

b. Individual writing

- Journal books were used for writing their personal feelings and experiences.
- Workbooks or writing books were used for individual writing tasks.

3. Revising and editing

The teacher did not make use of the teaching aids because she did not do these stages in class.

The procedures of how the teacher teaching writing in class:

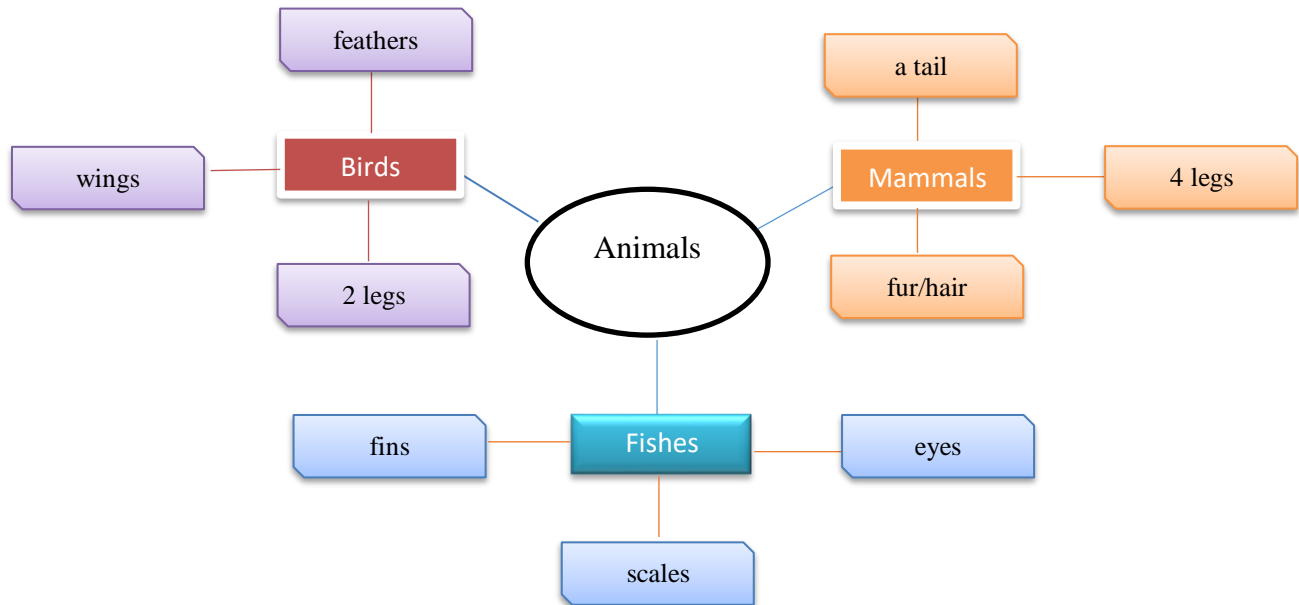
1. Prewriting

a. Brainstorming

The teacher wrote a word related to the topic that the students were going to write. She wrote it on the whiteboard and she asked what kind of things related to the word. The students usually responded by giving various answers.

b. Mind mapping

Firstly, the teacher wrote one central topic in the middle of the white board. Then, she drew some branches connected to the central topic. For example:



c. Drawing

First, the teacher drew a picture on the whiteboard and did brainstorming technique. Second, the teacher elicited some ideas about what to write in a story. Last, the teacher asked the students to draw a picture on the journal and she asked the students to write a story based on the picture they drew.

d. Reading activities

- Silent reading

The teacher gave a copy of the story to each of the student and instructed the students to read the story silently. After the students finished reading the story, she asked the students' opinion about the story. She asked the students to mention any difficult words in the story and discussed the words with the students. The students were given chances to write the new words on the wordplay board.

- Storytelling

Firstly, the teacher asked the students to sit in the circle. After the students were ready to listen to the story, she started the story telling. She used the

storybook but she also made some miming and facial expression to make the activity more interesting. After she told the story, she asked the students' opinion about the story. She asked the students to mention any difficult words in the story and discussed the words with the students. She also asked the students to write the difficult words on the wordplay board.

e. Browsing on the internet

First, the teacher asked the students to go to the project room. Then, she explained how to browse on the internet and also showed them what kinds of information they had to search. The teacher used the laptop and the projector in this activity so that all students can understand her explanation and see the information on the screen clearly. Finally, the teacher divided the students into pairs and asked them to work together in searching the information. She also instructed the students to print the important information.

2. Writing

a. Pair or group work

The teacher divided the students into pairs or groups. The teacher was always careful in organizing the activity. The next step was to explain how to do the pair or group work. She also explained what they should do in the writing task. Finally, the teacher asked the students to start writing.

b. Individual writing

The teacher instructed the students what they should do in doing the writing task. After she was sure that all the students understood what to do, she asked them to start writing. She monitored the students while they were writing.

3. Revising and editing

There were no procedures done by the teacher in these stages since she was the one who did the revising and editing.

CONCLUSION

Teaching writing is not a simple thing to do since the students should be able to express their ideas or feeling through the written work. The teacher should be able to guide the students and she should be able to create some interesting activities to avoid students' boredom. Brown (2001) notes "Incorporate practices of good writers means the teachers consider the various things that efficient writer do, and see if your techniques include some of these practices. In line with the theories stated above, Ms. M mentioned that the writing process was very crucial since a teacher could not just ask them to write without showing them how to write. The teacher should be able to guide them in exploring ideas and organizing them in the written work.

Based on the observations, it was clear that the teacher implemented the writing process in the class by applying various techniques which had several procedures. The teacher also used several kinds of teaching aids in order to support the teaching techniques.

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