

THE USE OF WRITING GENERATOR TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS' INTEREST IN NARRATIVE WRITING

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Abstract

Writing is considered as the most difficult skill in language learning. Students find that it is so difficult to figure out the ideas that they want to express and to find the effective way to communicate the ideas to others. The use of a technology is the alternative that can be considered by the teachers to help their students to cope with this problem.

This paper reports the finding on how writing generator can be used as the tool to encourage students' interest in writing, in this study the focus is on Narrative writing. The finding from the observation and in depth interview shows that writing generator can encourage the students' interest in Narrative writing. It can help the students to plot ideas by providing different settings, several possibilities of themes, several of characters and events. The result of the study is expected to give the shed of light to the practice of teaching English by using technology.

Introduction

Today's students have grown up in a world filled with technology and they are all native speakers of the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet (Prensky, 2001). Therefore, The generation who is raised in digital world has come to believe that learning is meant to be loud, musical, colorful and energetic. For better and for worse teachers who want to reach out thus generation need to use media to grab and sustain attention (Reich & Daccord, 2008 p. 22).

Teachers can choose an appropriate technology that can deepen students' learning by supporting the instructional objectives of learning. For English class, there are a lot of creative and constructive instructional technologies that can be chosen by the teachers. The technologies can be deployed in accordance with the pedagogical methods and the language skills in the teaching.

However, most of teachers tend to use technology for the teaching of listening and speaking. There is only little concern on the other two skills, reading and writing. In fact, if the teachers use creative software for those skills, especially in teaching writing, it will be so much helpful for the students to develop their writing skill. Writing, especially for EFL learners is considered difficult. They have to think about the content of the writing, the structures and linguistic features of the text.

Therefore, the concern of this study is to find out how writing software can help students to develop their interest in writing that will eventually enhance their writing skills, especially in writing Narrative text. Narrative text is chosen in this study, because the text is learned in both level of Junior and senior high school and Narrative is a very privileged text in English to give the children opportunity to articulate values, attitude and belief and it exposes the students continuously at home at and school (Christie & Derewianka, 2008, p. 31).

Theoretical Framework

Random Plot Generator is a technology that can be used by students to set the scene, build the characters, describe them, name them, and work out on how they fit together in an interesting story. There are some short animated stories that have short duration and can be enjoyed by students before they create the plots for a good story by using Random Plot Generator. Students will choose a theme from its selection of plot generators, give them some keywords to play with or let them prompt some ideas at random, they automatically create a plot, title and a cover for their novel or film (WritingExercise.co.uk, 2018).

This kind of procedure in writing can create interesting teaching and learning activity in the classroom. It also can make the students more aware on the social function of a Narrative text that is to entertain and instruct through dealing with unusual and unexpected development of events (Droga & Humphrey, 2003, p. 149). The attractive software will maintain students' interest to develop each stage of the schematic structure of Narrative that begins with the orientation, then, the complication that is followed by an Evaluation, and is ended with a resolution and the last coda as being an optional stage for commentary (Droga & Humphrey, 2003). Students' confidence in writing Narrative by using certain of linguistic features will develop a lot because the software shows the examples of the use of particular nouns, noun groups, action verbs, adverbial and dependent clauses.

There are other numerous benefits of using technology in teaching as argued by Warschauer, Shetzer, Meloni (2000, p. 86), The first is to help students to be active and creative mastery of technology for receiving information and knowledge. Second, it is to develop the autonomous learning strategies. Third, students will learn communication and teamwork skills by using technology. Fourth, the importance of cross cultural learning to be able to communicate with people from different cultures and interpret information from varied cultural contexts. The last is the importance of critical learning and literacy skills by considering how new information technologies are helping reshape social, political and economic contexts in a broader sense.

Methods

This study employed qualitative approach as it involved the data collection and qualitative data analysis. This study has a characteristic of a case study because it is focused on one particular instance of educational experience or practice (Freebody, 2003, p. 81). The purpose is to portray a teaching practice by using writing generator as a technological aid in teaching Narrative.

This research was undertaken at a government Junior High School in Bandung, West Java, Indonesia. The classroom observation was conducted at IX Grade Classroom in eight sessions and each session lasted for 80 minutes. The classroom observation was done from October to end of November 2018. A face-to-face interview with the students was conducted at the end of this program to obtain more comprehensive data on their perspective toward the teaching process.

Findings and Discussion

The observation data indicate that the teacher conducted several steps in implementing writing Generator that will be discussed as follows.

Step 1. The teacher introduced Random Plot Generator comprehensively that can be found at at <http://writingexercises.co.uk/plotgenerator.php>.

The teacher explained the purpose of the learning, the reason why the software was used and generated students' enthusiasm for doing the learning activity.

Step 2. The teacher explained in details each elements of the writing generator by clicking the buttons of main character, supporting character, setting, situation, theme, and the actions.

Then, the teacher asked the students to try to use the writing generator collaboratively with their group. They had joint construction activity to create a story by using the software. At first, the students click the buttons in turn to generate the elements. Then, the students put all elements together and come up with an idea for a story. If they thought it was needed, they could change an element by clicking the button again.

Step 3. Each group began to make a story line and they had to understand all elements that they chose as a story line. Then, they generated all elements together. In the end, they were successful to make their own Narrative text through the Random Plot Generator story line.

Step 4. At the end of the lesson, each groups presented their stories in front of the class in turn to have feedback from friends and teachers.

The data from the interview reveals that the students found the steps in the writing process by using the Random Plot Generator were very good to help them to create a good Narrative text. The students found that feedback from peers and teachers was very valuable. The application was useful to help them to make the story more easily and they felt that their imagination was full of ideas when they had to choose the characters, main setting, theme, plot, etc. They found that it was so fun when they chose all the story elements. The students are aware that writing is not easy and sometimes they get stuck in writing. The application had widened their mind to find ideas of a story. They also thought that the application had enhanced their creativity and critical thinking skills. It is possible because the various choices that are provided in the generator not only will make the learning process interesting but also can be the valuable source of discussion.

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