

IMPROVING CREATIVE WRITING FOR YOUNG LEARNERS USING CTL POST COVID 19

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Abstract

The research aims to implement contextual teaching and learning approach in writing skill which is integrated in the lesson plan. This is a case study in a primary school in Indonesia. The purpose of the study is to investigate the improvement of students' writing skill post covid 19. There are five strategies in contextual teaching and learning approach, namely relating, experiencing, applying, cooperating, and transferring (REACT). The implementation is providing practices on descriptive and narrative writing. The assessment is the learning project related to real-world context and writing story telling. The result indicates that CTL enhances the students' creative writing because it is practical in real world situation. It is suggested to integrate CTL in a lesson plan which is relevant with the current development in English language teaching.

Keywords: contextual teaching and learning, creative writing, lesson plan, REACT

I INTRODUCTION

One of the most common problem for Indonesian students in writing skill is putting the ideas into written form. Students understand what the teachers have explained theoretically, unfortunately, they have found difficulties in constructing their ideas and thought into creative writing. For this reason, they feel reluctant to write and do not have motivation to produce written answers in English. In addition, learning English is considered as foreign language acquisition that unknown vocabulary and sentence pattern are difficult to be mastered easily. Furthermore, grammar usage and time signals in basic English material are found difficult to be memorized so that students have inability to master this language (Taylor & Taylor, 2019).

It is a fact that mastering English language is different from learning Indonesian language for the mother tongue has no difference in using time signal and its language pattern. A person could communicate in Indonesian language without memorizing various sentence patterns (D'Arcy Nell, 2017; Inan-Karagul & Yuksel, 2014). In addition, formal education in Indonesia usually emphasizes the English teaching only on theory rather than practice. As the result, students become lack of practices especially in writing (Neff-Lippman, 2011; Reyhan, 2012). The condition also contributes to the problem of comprehension in writing skill, even though the teachers begin the learning process step by step by introducing vocabulary, explaining grammar rules, and providing examples (Renandya et al., 2018; McCowan, 2010). Therefore, the purpose of the study is to provide new concept in writing by using creativity through contextual teaching and learning in term of the lesson plan, classroom activity, and particular project for the students. In this case, creative writing is the term should be emphasized to enhance learning motivation using online media (Satriani et al., 2012). The second term is the use of CTL that provides teachers detailed solutions in lesson plan (Nawas, 2020).

The students' background problem supports the idea of using contextual teaching and learning approach in order to create creative writing in the learning activity. Furthermore, improving writing skill should be included in the goal of lesson plan by integrating the skill and the use of CTL (Nasrun, 2014; Lynch, 2014). REACT is the strategy of contextual teaching and learning used in this study which means relating, experiencing, applying, cooperating, and transferring (Crawford, 2001). The lesson plan accommodates writing skill by using the application of REACT in online class. Furthermore, the lesson plan is described in detail for the learning activity, assessment, students' task, practices, and teaching materials. The examples of REACT enforcement are applying and transferring. Teacher gives an example of writing through video, explanation, and tutorial. The students practice writing according to the topic that has been set. Students are also asked to find another topic that matches with their preferences so that they know what to write and what to do in writing. In this case, the students learn how to transfer the basic knowledge of English skill in students' real classroom and life situation (TienRafida, 2016; Karim, 2017).

The use of CTL approach aims to set a lesson plan for writing skill. The implementation will be applied by using REACT (Satriani et al., 2012; Fadhilah et al., 2017). For this reason, CTL approach

applies real practices and experiences for students to learn English. The application can be seen in the students' task and project by using real situation materials and background knowledge (Preradovic, 2020). Students transfer the knowledge into written form related to school and real life. CTL approach contains real practice to develop knowledge through projects and activities (Berns & Erickson, 2001; Susiloningsih, 2016). In this case, students have opportunity to create community of transferring knowledge among friends and practicing English skills. In addition, students also have opportunity to make connection between academic knowledge and situation occurred in the teaching process (Sears, 2003). As the benefit, students increase their motivation in mastering English and experiences in improving writing skill.

The previous researches conducted contextual teaching and learning approach for improving the academic purposes. The results indicated that the application of CTL improved students' critical thinking and motivation (Winarti, 2016; Sihono, 2004). In addition, CTL provided recommended strategy of teaching and learning in social, sciences, and English skills. The previous studies proved the effectiveness of contextual teaching and learning approach for all academic subjects. For this reason, contextual teaching and learning approach should be applied for the effectiveness and benefits in improving creative writing. Furthermore, character-based teaching materials through the contextual teaching and learning approach generated in the development study, have been declared effective for improving learning skills and developing student character (Sianipar et al., 2017). Contextual teaching and learning activities had positive effect on language achievement. It is strongly recommended to be used especially in improving writing skill (Gull & Shehzad, 2015; Dewi, 2018)

The application of contextual teaching and learning approach develops student English competency by engaging the material and the real experience. The strategy of REACT also motivates students to make connection between knowledge and the application to their lives as family members, citizens, and students (Hudson & Whisler, 2007). Thus, the lesson plan is designed to meet students' need and learning target to enhance writing skill. Furthermore, the study aims to answer the following research questions. 1) the integration of CTL approach and creative writing in the lesson plan, 2) the implementation of teaching creative writing to young learner post Covid 19.

II MATERIALS AND METHOD

The study uses qualitative method to observe students' improvement in writing skill. The case study is taken in a primary school in Indonesia that the activity is conducted through online learning due to covid 19. The participants are the sixth-grade students in three classrooms. The study aims to meet the target learning in creative writing, apply REACT strategy in the lesson plan, and emphasize the students' involvement in learning activity from knowledge to the applications of real situation. The data collection technique uses the following procedure.

Outlining lesson Plan	The implementation	Data analysis
integrating creative writing and CTL (REACT)	Students' activity, Class projects	Students' writing result

Table 1. Data Collection Technique

III RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The function of REACT proves that students relate their background knowledge, practice vocabulary and grammar, cooperate with friends, and transfer knowledge. The strategy of REACT in CTL supports students to be autonomous and creative learners. The implementation of teaching creative writing to young learner post covid 19 consists of relating, experiencing, applying, cooperating, and transferring.

Relating means that students use their background knowledge to be related in the materials taught. The implementation of relating can be seen from the activity related to the topic that has been introduced. Students can identify the sequence of the story, and guess the meaning of vocabularies. In brief, relating means students are familiar with the topic given and perform well in the writing exercises. For this reason, the purpose of relating is to make connection between ideas and practical activities. The

activity can be seen in the lesson plan that they can put the ideas of storytelling into their descriptive and narrative writing. Students describe the main character from the story and write the sequence of story.

Experiencing is contextual teaching and learning strategy that makes meaningful connection between knowledge and academic purposes. Students are motivated to retell the sequence of the story using proper expression and intonation in online class. The examples are the activity of story repetition that each student presents the storyline in simple words or sentences.

Applying is the students' participation in constructing sentences to build a story and to describe someone or something according to background knowledge. In writing descriptive writing, students practice to write what they know to describe picture or someone they know to produce a creative writing. Here, students can apply the knowledge of grammar rules and vocabulary into descriptive and narrative writing. Students can retell the story by using simple present tense to conclude the story.

Contextual teaching and learning strategy accommodate strengths and weaknesses on students' writing skill. Whereas, students can share knowledge among the others in order to help in facing complex problem in understanding instruction or inability to accomplish the task. The purpose of cooperating is to maintain collaboration, team work, and participation. In this phase, cooperating enables students to be autonomous learners that they do not depend only on the teacher whenever they have problem in learning, in fact, they learn how to find solution themselves through literature, sharing knowledge, and information from media. In cooperating with other students, they need certain time to discuss their project. As it is online learning, they collaborate the ideas into written form and present the result in online class.

Students transfer what they know into descriptive and narrative writing. The activity can be seen from transferring the written work into spoken form by doing presentation in online class. In transferring knowledge into written form, students can use their background knowledge and experiences to conclude the story and provide moral value. They can share the conclusion and thought to the peers in order to be active in online learning.

Contextual teaching and learning help students in relating the materials they are learning to real life context. What the students have known as background knowledge, will be connected with the prior knowledge and forms experiences in learning. The learning target accommodates students in mastering writing skill. Thus, learning through context and real situation are great opportunities for students to practice theory in the class to be applied in community where they live.

The following lesson plan is used to teach creative writing. The purpose of outlining a lesson plan is to implement contextual teaching and learning approach to improve writing skill.

Writing genre	Teaching and learning activity	Creative writing
1. Descriptive writing	(Introduction) - Teacher introduces a topic by using video, pictures, and storytelling (teacher can use zoom meeting or Google meet). - Teacher asks students to do repetition in vocabulary - Teacher asks students to guess the meaning of vocabulary that they learn - Teacher explains grammar rules - Teacher shows a video how to use grammar rules into sentences. - Teacher asks students to do repetition on sentences and words. - Teacher explains descriptive writing by giving example and showing video to construct sentences.	Storytelling project, writing

2. Narrative writing	<p>(Relating and experiencing)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each student writes a sentence to describe something/ someone. - Each student shares the result of the descriptive writing - Teacher shows the examples how to write descriptive essay in two or three sentences. - Each student writes descriptive writing related to the topic in two or three sentences. <p>(Applying and cooperating)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teacher tells a story related to the topic - Students do repetition on some sentences. - Students write descriptive writing about the object or the figure in the story. <p>(Transferring)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students present their writing to the class (they can tell the sequences of story using proper expression and intonation). <p>(Introduction)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teacher introduces a folklore from Indonesia using video, story book, and pictures (teacher can use zoom meeting or Google meet). - Teacher asks students to do repetition on vocabulary - Teacher shows some pictures and asks students to guess the vocabulary - Teacher explains grammar rules - Teacher shows a video how to use grammar rules into sentences. - Teacher asks students to do repetition on sentences and words. - Teachers explain narrative writing by giving example and showing video to construct sentences. <p>(Relating and experiencing)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each student writes a sentence to retell one of the actions on the folklore. - Each student shares the result of narration. - Teacher shows the examples how to write narrative essay in two or three sentences. - Each student writes two or three sentences according to 	
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	<p>the actions on the pictures.</p> <p>(Applying, cooperating, and transferring)</p> <p>- Teacher asks students to make a sequence story by working together in group.</p> <p>- Students present the story in sequence.</p>	
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Table 2. Lesson Plan

The lesson plan provides detail information of applying REACT in contextual teaching and learning. It promotes some topics related to real world context. Based on the data taken in the assessment and students' work, it can be seen that students perform well in their study of acquiring English as the foreign language, students participate more in the discussion because the topics related to the knowledge of world that they have mastered. Furthermore, it can be seen that students improve their motivation in learning English because they are not only learning the language, but also enhancing creativity in writing, and cooperation.

The application of REACT in the lesson plan assists the teacher to know what to do in the class activities. The teacher as the facilitator works optimally in the teaching because students are the centre of the learning, and the teacher facilitates the class with various activity for monitoring their improvement. The function of lesson plan also provides detail activity and learning target so that both of them comprehend the objective of the study.

Contextual teaching and learning approach help teacher and students in connecting the meaning of subject matter through prior and new knowledge in order to get new understanding. The strategy of CTL provides a wide range of activities that enables students to take part in various contexts of their lives. The benefit of applying CTL is to motivate students in using creativity and the ability to work together. The activity in lesson plan aims to educate learners to be creative in writing sentences. Furthermore, the benefit of CTL is to strengthen students' memory and understanding of the concept because the students are learning through the material that has taken from their experience and new knowledge. In other words, they relate their prior and new knowledge to understand the lesson. Thus, they will easily remember, recall, and comprehend the material. In addition, contextual teaching and learning engages students in significant activity that helps them to see meaningful work by formulating projects, identifying problems, making choices, searching out information and reaching conclusion.

IV CONCLUSION

The role of teacher in teaching English for young learners is important, especially in the new normal era or post covid 19. The study recommends some techniques in motivating students to learn and write creatively even though the class is conducted in online meeting. For it is an online learning, teacher should use creative media so that students can focus on the lesson. CTL provides REACT method that gives suitable steps for teachers to do in online class. Creative writing should be created to trigger students' ideas and participation in online class. Contextual teaching and learning provide the strategy to make students relate what they know, practice the language, perform well in discussion, and know how to present the story. That is the meaning of REACT in creative writing. This study suggests the future study to use not only descriptive and narrative writing for teaching, but also expository writing for writing development.

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