

CHAPTER II

PEN PAL PROJECT IN TEACHING WRITING

A. The Nature of Writing

1. The Definition of Writing

Writing is necessary for improving the quality of learning in today's era. As we know, writing is the most complex English skill after speaking, listening, and reading. That activity involves the construction of generating ideas on paper, on a computer screen, and some other material. Aljawi (2011) states that writing is the most important skill to have. He states that when the students can write they not only improve their writing skills but also improve other abilities. According to Pranoto (2004; 9) writing means pouring thoughts into the written form or telling something to others through writing. In particular, it is a translation of thoughts and ideas, sounds, or images into some sort of physical trace (McNamara and Allen, 2019). Based on the theories above, the researcher concludes as an activity that has a process to show thoughts, feelings, taste, and ideas to communicate with each other in written form.

There are two scale skill of language there are; receptive and productive skill. Writing skill is the one of beneficial skills that ought to be aced in language. In other words, the productive skills that exist in writing involve producing words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs. This activity needs some processes of thinking. It means that students need to gather ideas to write a good story or text. Writing also has purposes. According to Hedge (2005) the purpose of writing is to give information for someone we cannot presently talk through some description or story. By writing, the students are expected to hone students' skills in using vocabulary in sentences, strengthening responsiveness and overcoming a problem. To produce quality writing, students are also required to be able to organize, formulate and develop the ideas on the paper so that readers can follow the writer's message.

Besides, writing skills requires an accurate and precise grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and vocabulary (Sakkir, 2016). Based on some theories, the researcher concludes writing is a productive skill with an orderly thought process, it also involves writing rules such as choosing the right words. So, that they become coherent sentences so that readers can understand the contents of the writing.

2. Aspect of Writing

In general, this component is the most basic thing in writing. There are seven aspects of writing that are more specific according to Brown (2001) in Weigle (2002; 15) specifically:

a. Permanency

The first term is permanency. In this term, oral language is transitory and must be processed in real-time, while written language is permanent and can be read and re-read as often as one likes.

b. Production Time

The second term is production time in which writers generally have more time to plan, review and revise their words before they are finalized, while speakers must plan, formulate, and deliver their utterances in a few moments if they want to do a conversation.

c. Distance

The next term is a distance which explains that distance between the writer and the reader in both time and space, which eliminates much of the shared context that is present between the speaker and the listener in ordinary face-to-face contact.

d. Orthography

Orthography is the practice or study of correct spelling according to established usage. In a broader sense, orthography can refer to the study of letters and how they are used to express sounds and form words. It carries a limited amount of information compared to the

richness of devices available to speakers to enhance a message (e.g. stress, intonation, pitch, volume, pausing, etc.)

e. Complexity

The author must be able to combine sentences to be a reference to the next element.

f. Vocabulary

Vocabulary is a set of words that are familiar with the language used.

g. Formality

The last is formality in which writing tends to be more formal than speaking.

By following these aspects, the resulting product will be much better so that readers feel interested in getting the information conveyed.

3. Writing Process

Writing in the classroom should be reflective of the writing individuals do in their daily lives. Typically, the writer creates written texts with a specific purpose and for an intended audience. These considerations determine the form the writing will take and the language choices the writer makes noted by Christie (2016, n.p.), “As teachers and students together initiate writing activities in school, so they engage in writing processes, shaping meanings, working towards purposes and creating different texts, or products”. In the composition of considered pieces of writing that we intend others to read, this writing process usually takes the form of:

a. Planning/Pre-writing

The first stage in the writing process is planning. This activity will help students to generate the ideas, selection, and sorting of ideas to write about, consideration of purpose, and vocabulary. These strategies aim to motivate and build a concept.

b. Drafting or Composing

Drafting is a process of writing in which students write the ideas in the complete part of the composition. This part involved the introduction, body, and conclusion. At this stage, students are required to develop their ability to make cohesive text organize thoughts, and explaining the information.

c. Revising

The next stage is students can consider revision of the content and organization of their ideas. At this stage, students have a limited understanding of what is included in the improvement. Therefore, the role of the teacher at the revision stage is required to guide and teach them about the concept of revising.

d. Editing

After revising the contents and style, the next stage is editing for error spelling, text layout, grammar, capitalization and punctuation.

e. Publishing

The preparation of the text for sharing with an audience, with attention given to the form and style of the text.

Based on the explanation, writing is not an easy activity for everyone. Even beginners to advanced writers can find it difficult to start writing. For this reason, explanations in teaching writing are expected to increase students' ability to write.

B. The Nature of Pen Pal Project

1. Teaching Writing

Teaching writing is not easy in the school to college level. According to Gazarian (2002) teaching is a skill and an art. Teaching is giving lessons to someone (students) by training and giving instructions so that they gain some experience. With teaching activities, teachers must give treatment to students gradually and increase according to their abilities. Furthermore, teaching is always creating because no class has

the same criteria. In conclusion, teaching may be defined as a skill and art in showing or helping someone to learn how to do something, giving someone instructions, guiding someone in the study of something.

As known, Curry and Goodman (2003;78) teaching writing is an effort from the teacher to make the students understand how to write with a focus on both the content and the form. It means, not only effort is required but also the teacher must have an appropriate strategy and good instruction. The one of strategy that appropriate in this research is pen pal project. The strategy is used by the teacher useful, so that students can be motivated and not judge that writing is a boring activity. During the teaching and learning process, the teacher should give a clear explanation about what they will learn, so the students will get the advantages in the teaching and learning process.

In addition, Harmer (2004) proposes some tasks which teachers have to complete before, during, and after students writing, those are:

- a. Demonstrating this stage is where the teacher has to be able to draw these features to the students' attention.
- b. Motivating, the teacher can motivate the students to have an idea and persuading the students that writing can be an enjoyable activity.
- c. Supporting, the teacher always supporting the students' opinions when they are going to write in the class.
- d. Responding, the teacher should react to content and suggest their improvement.
- e. Evaluating, the teacher can indicate where the students wrote well and where the students make mistakes.

Based on the explanation, it is important for English teachers to understand not only the rules of teaching writing but also the way how to motivate the students in writing. In this activity, teachers as facilitators must be well-prepared to teach students in front of the class. Here, an appropriate way in teaching writing skills is using a pen pal project.

2. The Definition of Pen Pal Project

This research study will discuss pen pal activity. Harmer (2007) defines a pen pal as the individual or the person who sends letters and receives letters to create the connection. He says pen pal has done through writing a letter on a piece of paper and that will be sent on the internet. It is called mouse-pal, key-pal, e-pal, and so on. In today's technological era, it is done in a modern way because in this way the message is conveyed very quickly in a matter of minutes or seconds. This activity is very unique for students because they are used to dealing with the internet. Supporting the explanation above, Larrotta and Serrano (2012) in Guth (2002) that pen pals can be from local or from very far away, and exchanges can include group letters or individual letters. Shandomo (2009) identifies the objectives of pal programs to include writing and reading for the genuine purpose for audiences to celebrate differences and similarities. Although the pen pal activity is very short, it provides an experience that is never to be forgotten.

3. Recount Text

Based on curriculum 2013, recount text is a kind of text dealing with the experiences happened in the past and focuses on a sequence of events related to the events happened. Recount text is a text which lists and describes past experiences by retelling events in the order in which they happened in the chronological order (Knapp & Watskin, 2005). The purpose of a recount text is to retell events with the purpose of either informing or entertaining their audience.

As clarified by Sitorus and Sipayung (2018), various types of recount text can be seen from three aspects there are:

a. In the Personal Recount

Personal recount serves to tell about the author's personal experience. It contains the diaries and memorable incidents event. It uses a first-person point of view (I).

b. Factual Recount

This type talks about specific incidents and formal information. Examples news reports, historical stories, and scientific journal and articles. It uses a third-person point of view (she, he, it, and they).

c. Imaginative Recount

An imaginative recount is used to entertain the reader by recreating the events of an imaginary world.

Based on this explanation, it can be concluded that the researcher uses recount text in this study from three types of recount text above. The researcher focuses on the personal recount. There are several valid reasons the researcher chooses the recount text because it is following the meaning of the pen pal itself. According to Anderson, *et al.*, (2010) in Dwi (2010) recount is speaking or writing about past events or a piece of text that retells past events, usually in the order which they happened. The aim of the text is retelling the past event or to tell someone's experience in chronological order. And this reason is strengthened by the results of a study by Hastuti and Nugroho (2016). In their study, they explain the use of recount texts because recount texts make it easier for students to choose the topic given by the teacher. Then, the teacher gives a topic about the events of everyday life to them. by following these topics, they can convey what the students feel to the readers, especially their pen pals.

4. The Processes of Pen Pal Project in Teaching Writing

In the 2013 curriculum, Project-Based Learning (PBL) is used in this project. Where two students exchange letters with any topic about recount text using email. Writing letters can make students more active. For writing activities to run well, there are several important things that the teacher must do, such as giving a lot of attention to developing student interest so that it is following the curriculum. In teaching by using pen pal

project there are some steps that should be done by teacher that focused on Project Based Learning as follow:

a. Making Essential Question

The first stage is the teacher or the students make a question or make a theme about what are they going to concept and to write.

b. Designing a Plan for Project

The teacher and students make a plan for the project to solve the problem in the first stage. The plan contains the rule of activity.

c. Creating the Schedule

Creating the schedule is important because this project is completed within the allotted time. Here, the activities that will be carried out are making a period for project work and making a deadline for project work.

d. Monitoring the Students' Progress

The teacher's job is to supervise the activities taking place. The teacher must check the student's work, where their writing results have reached. And, the teacher is required to help students who have difficulty in determining the topic of writing.

e. Assessing the Outcome

This stage is carried out when the task that the student is working on has been completed. The teacher evaluates their writing. The results are useful for helping teachers measure achievement in accordance with competency standards, providing feedback on student understanding, and helping teachers determine further strategies.

f. Evaluating the Experiences

At the end of the writing lesson, the teacher and students reflect on the project that has been done. Students express their feelings and experiences during this project. In other words, this stage is presenting their written product.

5. Advantages and Disadvantages of Pen Pal

Every media that is used have advantages, therefore the researcher is interest to use certain media. But, besides the advantages of media, it also has some disadvantages. So that, pen pal project has advantages and disadvantages. As clarified by Walker-Dalhouse Larrotta and Seranno 2012 there are various benefits of using pen pal:

- a. Pen pal activity can bring useful learning movement
- b. It can give students with language and social aptitudes
- c. Will be able to learn about various functions and role of the language, phrase, vocabulary, and cultures.
- d. Increase students' knowledge of desire to have multicultural experiences.
- e. Pen pal letter exchanges help students transfer what they learn in the classroom to the outside world.

This strategy creates a material lesson that easy to help the learners in teaching-learning process, the teacher adds fun letters to facilitate students' ease of learning. The disadvantages of pen pal are following:

- a. People lie about their life; it means when we find that someone makes up an entirely different life. They can lie about their age, where they come from and background life about them.
- b. Strangers will threaten to ask you for money if you give too much personal information.
- c. Easily influenced by outside cultures that are not by the culture itself.
- d. The existence of coercion of suicide threats and pornography against one of the pen pals.

C. Previous Study

There is study that used systematic review as a method in reviewing journal, articles and other sources. Previous research study under title "Developing Technology-Supported, Evidence-Based Writing Instruction for Adolescents with Significant Writing Disabilities". The reason of this

research is to explore information that can be synthesized for knowledge. In conclusion, the study shows that using technology in writing such as; blog and e-pal, can make students are freer to enjoy writing using technology, where web-based technology supports learning and student involvement to develop writing potential. This is also the curriculum so that it can be developed further and adjust their abilities.

Besides, another study is also conducted by Al-Hajji and Shuqair with the title “A Systematic Review on Using Literature for the Young Learners in EFL Classroom”. The reason for this research is to explore information that can be synthesized for knowledge. In conclusion, the study shows that using literature for young learners in EFL classroom can be a fun and effective way of teaching English as a foreign language. They said that for the teacher to use literary effect for young learners in EFL classroom, he or she has to be all-inclusive of all the different styles of learning in an EFL classroom of young learners using literature.