TEACHING ACADEMIC WRITING BASED ON NEED ANALYSIS FOR INDONESIAN EFL LEARNERS AT UNIVERSITY

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Abstract: There are four skills in English teaching and learning, they are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening and reading are categorized as receptive skills, while speaking and writing are as productive skills. Writing skill is one of productive skills that needs some competences, such as linguistics competence, getting the idea competence, and organizing the idea competence. This article will discuss about Teaching Academic Writing based on Need Analysis for Indonesian EFL Learners at University. It is kind of research article that will use Qualitative Research Methodology. The subject of this research will be the university students who join in academic writing. The researcher will try to do need analysis for the students by using questionnaire. Based on the questionnaire, the researcher will create syllabus for academic writing, then he will use it in teaching and learning process for Indonesian EFL learners at university. At last, he will assess the result of students’ writing by using scoring rubric based on the organization of essay. This research article will be useful for academic writing lecturers. This kind of article can be used as a model for lecturer in teaching academic writing at University, because this article will provide some materials which are needed by the students based on the need analysis.

Keywords: Academic Writing, Need Analysis, University Students

Introduction
There are four skills in English teaching and learning, they are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening and reading are categorized as receptive skills, while speaking and writing are as productive skills. Writing skill is one of productive skills that needs some competences, such as linguistics competence, getting the idea competence, and organizing the idea competence. 

Firstly, linguistics competence is a competence to use the language. In this case, linguistics competence refers to the grammatical competence. It is a competence that focuses on building sentences, such as understanding part of speech, tenses in active and passive, and conditional sentence. It means that in grammatical competence, the students should be able to understand part of speech and to make sentences correctly. This kind of competence is very useful for EFL learners in writing class.

The second competence which is also important is that getting the idea competence. It is kind of competence to create the topic or idea at the beginning of writing process. It is very important competence because based on need analysis, this is a big problem for EFL learners in writing class. They always give question at the beginning of the class, “what should I write?” This kind of question indicates that most of the learners have a problem to get the idea. It means that they have difficulty to find the idea at the beginning of writing. Consequently, it is very important for the EFL learners in writing to have getting the idea competence.

The last one is that organizing the idea competence. Coherence and cohesion are the characteristics of good paragraph. To create coherence and cohesion, a writer should write the idea in sequence. It means that there is no jumping idea in writing. Consequently, this kind of competence is also the important one for the EFL learners who want to learn writing. To sum up, linguistics, getting the idea, and organizing the idea are some points which are needed by EFL learners in writing.

In a university level, writing is divided into some types, they are paragraph writing (basic writing), essay writing (intermediate writing), and academic writing (advance writing). All of them are correlated each other. It means that, the competence in paragraph writing is needed by EFL learners for essay writing. It is also in line between essay and academic writing. In another word, paragraph writing is the basic one that must be understood by EFL learners in writing class. It is the first step before learning academic writing. Consequently, it is very important for the EFL learners to have skill in paragraph writing. In this article, the researcher would like to focus on paragraph writing as the first step to write academically.

Based on the needs analysis, the researcher found some points, they are (1) EFL learners have difficulty to find the topic that they would like to write, (2) EFL learners have difficulty to construct a sentence, and (3) EFL learners need an ability to construct sentences in sequence. Considering those three reasons, the lecturers and the students need some materials that can cover those problems in writing class, in order that, the target of learning basic academic writing (paragraph writing) can be achieved.

This research develops syllabus for basic academic writing (paragraph writing) for EFL learners at university. This syllabus is developed based on CTL theory and it can be used for teaching writing at basic
level. In this research, the syllabus is developed communicatively. Communicative syllabus is a syllabus that can cover specific competence and needs of the learners. This idea is supported by Piepho in Sismiati & Latief (2012:45) “...communicative syllabus for particular course would reflect specific aspect of communicative competence to the learner’s proficiency level and communicative needs”. In this research, functional syllabus was adapted being used to develop the syllabus of writing communicatively. It means that the syllabus was developed communicatively based on the characteristics of functional syllabus which was adapted.

The characteristics of functional syllabus are (1) Language is a system for the expression of meaning; (2) The primary function of language is for interaction and communication; (3) The structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses; (4) the primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structure features, but categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse (Halliday & Cooke in Sismiati & Latief, 2012:45). Shortly, the functional syllabus has meaning for interaction and communication that can be used to communicate based on the function. Furthermore, functional syllabus does not emphasize on grammatical. Based on the characteristics mentioned, it can be seen that the functional syllabus focuses on spoken language rather than written language. However, the researcher, in this case, used the characteristics in written language to create a paragraph writing. It means that the syllabus was developed to create a paragraph that has meaning that can create a communication between writer and reader. However, the syllabus that was developed in this research still considers the mechanical issue of writing such as grammar, punctuation, and capitalization. This is what the researcher said as the adaptive functional syllabus.

As the researcher stated above that the syllabus was developed based on, besides functional syllabus, Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) Theory. According to Sears’ (2002:2) that CLT assumptions are: (1) It has interaction between students and sources in learning; (2) The students should have a need in learning something and use their capability to achieve their learning purpose; (3) teaching is designed as learning process for the students; (4) the materials which the students learn are got step by step and the students practice to write directly, the researcher uses the term for it as practical technique.

Method

The researcher used Yalden’s model to do this research. The models are (1) Need Analysis; (2) Development; (3) Validation and Revision; (4) Try-out, and (5) Second Revision to Produce Final Product (Yalden, 1987).

Need analysis was done to the EFL learners at university by giving questionnaire. The need analysis was conducted to the students by giving questionnaire to find (1) the materials which the students need for the academic point of view; (2) the writing activity that can attract the interest of students; (3) the material that the students have already got; and (4) time allotment for writing class.

Based on the need analysis result, the researcher developed the syllabus by doing the following steps: (1) description of purpose; and (2) production of syllabus. Afterwards, the researcher did the next step namely validation and revision. In this step, the researcher validated the syllabus to the expert of syllabus. The validation focuses on the purpose of learning, content/material, and learning activity.

The next step is that to conduct tryout. The purpose of conducting tryout is to get information about the developed syllabus, whether or not the syllabus applicable. The tryout activities are implementation, observation, reflection, and revision. The last step is that to produce final product based on the result of tryout. The product of this research is that syllabus for paragraph writing as the basic level of academic writing.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

Syllabus for paragraph writing are the final product for this research. The syllabus was developed based on the CTL theory to give chance for the students to practice what they learnt in the classroom. The characteristics of this kind of learning are as follows. First, the students interact with the source of learning directly. In this case, the lecturer ask the students to write something that relate to their environment such as friend and someone who has made different. This kind of activity can support the students to learn something new that they get from their environment. Furthermore, it can help the students to write a paragraph easily because they are writing something that they have been familiar with them. The second is that the students should learn based on what they need. It means that the material given in the syllabus should be prepared based on what the students need. This kind of material can support the students to learn writing because they learn what they actually need. The third characteristics is that the students learn step by step. This kind of activity is needed by the students because writing activity needs process. This kind of opinion is supported by Oshima & Hogue (2007:15) that writing needs some steps and it cannot be done in one action. Consequently, syllabus for writing class should be emphasizing on process.

Based on the findings, the syllabus could be applied by the lecturer well and the students can involve actively in the classroom. For instance, when the lecturer asked the students to write about introducing
paraphrased, the students wrote about their friends, before they wrote, they were given an instrument to find a data about the personality of their friends. This kind of activity can help them to get a valid data about their friends and also it helped them to write about. Then they should write a paragraph based on the data they got. However, the students sometimes have difficulty to construct a certain sentence. The lecturer found some mistakes in grammar, for instance. It is a weakness of the students. These are some sentences that the lecturer found (1) She live; (2) she love; (3) She haven’t a job and some other similar mistakes. Consequently, it is also very important to give a chance for the students to learn how to construct a sentence before they learn how to construct a paragraph.

At the second topic that is about someone who has made different, the syllabus was also able to be applied well by the lecturer. However, in this topic, the students had difficulty how to find a topic. They did not know whom they should write. To help the students, the lecturer proposed listing technique to get the topic. In this case, the lecturer applied writing process based on Oshima & Hogue (2007:15), they are (1) getting the idea; (2) organizing the idea; (3) writing rough draft; and (4) polishing. The technique was done step by step and being followed by practicing. The lecturer explained in sequence and invited the students to practice what they learnt. By doing this activity, the students were very active to give respond by proposing some questions when they did not understand, and sometimes they students asked a comment to the lecturer about what they wrote.

Beside applying the syllabus to the classroom, the syllabus was also validated. The validator of syllabus was done by the expert of syllabus. According to the expert, the syllabus, in general, was good and applicable. However, the expert suggested some points, they are (1) purpose of learning should be as specific as possible; (2) consider the condition of students to determine the material that is given to the students, because most of the students are the beginner writers; (3) start some activities with the game that relate to the material given.

Tryout was done by using two topics, they are about introducing paragraph as the first topic and the second topic is someone who has made a different. The first topic focused on the implementation of constructing sentence, then the second topic focused on writing process that emphasized the material on constructing paragraph. The tryout was conducted in four sessions in May to June 2014. Those four sessions are devided for two topics, in means that each topic has two meetings. In this tryout, the researcher was the lecturer, so he also observed directly the condition in which the implementation of tryout.

Based on the observation, the tryout ran well. At the first tryout that consists of two meeting, the students were active in the classroom, because the activity was started by using game, so they were happy and had high motivation. Furthermore, they also get easier to do some activities that the lecturer instructed such as to find the data, to write some sentences based on the data, and to combine the sentences to be one introducing paragraph. It was easier for them because the lecturer provided instrument for the students and also did the activities step by step. Those activities were done in two meetings, the first meeting focused on getting the data and constructing sentences, while the second meeting focused on constructing paragraph.

The second tryout that uses the second topic, namely someone who has made a different, was also successful. It was done in two meetings. However, they students had difficulty to find the topic, what they should write, at the first meeting. At the second meeting, the students had already got the easiness to find the topic and developed the topic to be topic sentence, then constructed it to be a paragraph.

**Discussion**

The syllabus that the researcher developed was funcional syllabus. it consists of the target competence, the indicator, main material, activities, and time allotment.

The target competence was selected based on the need analysis. They are (1) EFL learners have difficulty to find the topic that they would like to write, (2) EFL learners have difficulty to construct a sentence, and (3) EFL learners need an ability to construct sentences in sequence.

Finding a topic is one of some problems that they students had in every writing class. It also happened in this research. Based on the findings above, the lecturer had different ways to help the students to find a topic. For the first topic, the lecturer asked the students to write about their friends. It certainly helped the students to find a topic, because they had been familiar with their friends. Then for the second topic, the lecturer applied listing technique. According to Nordquist (2014) listing is one of the simplest writing strategy to breakdown the idea. By doing this activity, the writer (especially beginner writers) can determine the topic that they should write, because they get many ideas by breaking it down. In short, the technique that the lecturer did was that writing about someone familiar and using listing technique.

For the second difficulty, difficulty to construct the sentence, the lecturer gave brief explanation about constructing sentence and being followed by practicing. The material given was that about four types of simple sentences. As we know that there are four types of sentences in English, there are simple sentence, compound sentence, complex sentence, and compound-complex sentence (Oshima & Hogue, 2007:11). Furthermore, simple sentence has four types, they are subject-verb, subject-verb-verb, subject-subject-verb, and subject-subject-verb-verb. To help the students as the beginner writer, the lecturer gave only simple sentences.
The next difficulty was that constructing the sentences into a paragraph, and the researcher calls it as sentences in sequences. As the researcher stated that the lecturer did writing process. One of the processes was that organizing the idea. To organize the idea, the lecturer introduced to the students about simple outline technique based on listing technique. This kind of technique really helped them to organize the idea through some sentences in sequence. However, when the students organize the idea, they did not write a complete sentence, they just write the idea in sequence. After that, they wrote rough draft, then polished the draft by doing two activities. The activities are revising and editing. Revising is an activity to check the content of paragraph such as coherence and unity, and editing is an activity to check the grammar, capitalization, and punctuation. Editing was the last activity, because in functional syllabus, grammar was not considered as number one (Halliday & Cooke in Sismiati & Latief, 2012:45). Through this kind of activity, the students got experience in writing process. It means that the students could learn from the process that they got step by step, it is one of the characteristics of CTL learning theory (Sears, 2002:2).

All in all, the difficulty was able to handle by the lecturer by giving a treatment to the students with the different technique and some activities in sequence (step by step activity).

Furthermore, the indicator of the competence was also available in this syllabus, the indicator was developed based on the need analysis, the syllabus was based on the need analyses, first is that sentence construction. This kind of material is very important because based on the need analysis the students had difficulty in constructing the sentence. The second material is that about writing process. In this material, the students got some skills, they are the skill to get the idea, organizing the idea, and revising-editing. in organizing the idea and revising, the students were trained to write the idea in sequence through sentences, while in editing, the students got the material about mechanics issue such as punctuation and capitalization. The last material was that narrative paragraph. This kind of material is very important, because through this material, the lecturer can can apply CTL. One of the characteristics in CTL is that the students can interact with the source of learning (Sears, 2002:2). This material (narrative paragraph) the students can find the story from their environment directly. It means that they interact with the source of learning.

The activity of this syllabus was developed based on need analysis, they are games that relate to material, lecturing, discussing, practicing, guiding, and creating final product of writing. The function of game is very important because it can motivate the students in writing class. Lecturing is an activity to give brief explanation to the material, while discussing is the session for question and answer about the material given. Furthermore, practicing, guiding, and creating final product are activities about the material given and being accompanied by the lecturing through guiding activity in creating final product. Those the last three activities were done in one time, because three of them related to each other. Finally, time allotment which is available for each meeting at writing class is that 100 minutes.

Conclusion and Suggestion

The product of this research is that syllabus for basic academic writing that the researcher calls it as paragraph writing. this syllabus was developed based on Yalden’s Model that was begun with the need analysis of the students. Based on the need, analysis the product of syllabus was developed. This syllabus consists of the target competence, the indicator, main material, activities, and time allotment.

For the next researcher, this kind of syllabus can be used as the topic for experimental research to see the effectiveness of using this syllabus in writing class.

References


Biodata

Hari Prastyo. The researcher was born on Jombang, August 15th, 1986. He finished his undergraduated program at “Maulana Malik Ibrahim” State Islamic University of Malang on 2008. In addition, on 2012 he got his Magister Degree in English Education at Islamic University of Malang. At 2013, he presented his first paper in international conference on English Linguistics and Literature. The next year, he presented his second paper at National Conference of 6th NELTAL. Furthermore, the researcher has interest to macro linguistics and education field of study.