



## IMPROVING STUDENTS' INDIRECT SPEECH PRACTICE IN WRITING THROUGH PICTURES OF LOCAL STORY NARRATIVE TEXT

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### Abstract

Having realized the importance of English as one of the international languages, the students should master English writing skill as a means to deliver and share information, feeling, and thought in the globalization era. To produce a good writing, many language aspects should be paid attention well. Grammar is one of them. In the process of writing, students often fail to apply their knowledge of grammar. The condition is understood since in changing direct speech into indirect speech involves many types of grammar text and the changing of elements such as pronouns, verbs, and adverbs from the quoted speech sentences. This study aims to improve students' indirect speech practice in writing through pictures of local story narrative text. An action research was carried out at twelfth graders of science program in SMA *Negeri 1 Pabelan* Semarang regency. The procedures included planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting. The result showed that the great improvement occurred. Students were enthusiastic to involve in the teaching learning process. The great students' improvements were obtained when the students were successful in changing direct speech into indirect speech. Therefore, the use of pictures of local story narrative text is able to improve the students' indirect speech practice.

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## INTRODUCTION

Writing is actually a challenging activity but in fact, to produce a readable text is something uneasy. When writing, a student should frequently have more time to think than she or he does in oral activity. Writing activity demands a student to bind her or his idea in accurate language use. It means that a message she or he wants to convey should be put in good order, correct structure, and appropriate word choice. While according to Kern (2000:172), writing is essential to academic language learning for a number of reasons. First, through writing, students develop their ability to think explicitly about how to organize and express their thoughts, feelings, and ideas in ways compatible with envisioned reader's expectation. Second, writing allows students to create and reshape meaning through explicit manipulation of forms. Third, writing provides time for students to process meaning. Teacher should find ways or strategies to make students produce fluent, accurate, and appropriate written English text.

There are some aspects which need to be considered if the goal of the English teacher is to enable students to produce fluent, accurate and appropriate written English. According to Broughton (1980:116) they are mechanical problems with the script of English, problems of accuracy of English grammar and lexis, problems of relating the style of writing to the demands of a particular situation, and problems of developing ease and comfort in expressing what needs to be said. From this statement, it can be known clearly that grammar is one of important factors that involves in writing.

Moreover, Murcia says that grammar in writing will help writers develop their knowledge of linguistic resources and grammatical systems to convey ideas meaningfully and appropriately to intended readers (2001:233). It means that grammar in writing will give more or less contribution to develop students' ability to

communicate using meaningful and appropriate sentence in written context. The other experts, Richards and Renandya say that knowledge of grammatical system of the language was one of the many components which underlay the notion of communicative competence (2002:145). This statement convinces everybody that grammatical system actually is really needed in teaching and learning language. Also, Ur in Thornbury (1999:14) states that there is no doubt that knowledge – implicit or explicit – of grammatical rules is essential for the mastery of language. While Thornbury himself states that many learners come to language classes in the expectation that at least some of the time they will be studying the grammar of the language (1999:20). According to Cameron (2001:241) "It is different because the first language is already a huge system that a child has in place; because, in comparison, the child will encounter such a small amount of the foreign language; and because it is "foreign" – often the language 'belongs' to people in a distant and strange culture." For Indonesian who learns English as a foreign language, writing and grammar tend to be difficult because different languages means different writing styles of organization and different grammatical rules.

The condition was also experienced by students at the twelfth grader of science program of SMA *Negeri 1 Pabelan* Semarang regency. Many students often complain and get confused when the teacher asks them to write sentences or complete paragraph using correct grammatical rules.

Firstly, some students may find themselves in a situation where they do not want to write. They may get bored if technique of teaching, especially writing skill, is taught only using traditional way. Secondly, the students have lack of self confidence to express their idea, feeling, or thoughts in written form. They think writing is complicated skill and need a long time in process. They should organize the idea in such a way and

the language which is used tends to be standardized. Thirdly, most of the students often say that lack of grammatical knowledge is source of their failures in constructing or completing sentences in a text. Indonesian and English grammar are much different in the rules.

Based on the problems above, it is an urgent need to implement teaching technique that can solve the problems. To solve the problems, the writer conducted an action research. In this study, the writer implemented the interesting technique of teaching grammar in writing using media picture. The appropriate pictures that were chosen were pictures of local story narrative text. Pictures of local story narrative text could be interesting and innovative media for teacher in teaching grammar in writing. By using pictures, Megawati&Anugerahwati (2012) state that the students are able to practice grammatical rules by changing direct speech in the speech balloon into indirect speech. This kind of assessment can be used to measure grammatical measurement (Brown, 2003:226).

Pictures of local story narrative text are series of picture that told students about Indonesian cultural heritage stories. The writer implemented these pictures of local story narrative text that were completed with dialogs in controlled writing. Controlled writing was to present some paragraphs to students in which they had to alter dialogues that follow pictures of local story narrative text into required structures or grammar throughout. In this research, the writer used narrative text and indirect speech as grammar which were controlled. Narrative was chosen because it was one of text kinds which was taught in the twelfth grader. And then, indirect speech was chosen because its existence could not be separated from narrative text. They are closely interconnected.. Converting direct speech into indirect speech is considered something complicated for students. It is like what Cray in Liu & Master (2003:19) states that, "Though the rule

seems linear and transparent, it is difficult because of its many steps. It also involves such things as *backshift*, which requires L2 students to know the tense that is "one back" from the tense in the quoted speech sentence and to know how to shift within the pronoun paradigm and the adverb system."

Indirect speech includes many types of grammar text and the changing of elements such as pronouns, verbs, and adverbs from the quoted speech sentences. So, it needs a lot of time and practices to be skillful. Then, teacher plays an important role to support students in grasping enough of grammatical knowledge to construct indirect speech in English. Then, one of the effective ways to foster it is by teaching them through practice. Ur (2009:19) defines practice as the rehearsal of certain behaviors with the objective of consolidating learning and improving performance. In this case, the students should be provided with opportunities to practice the structures they are learning. Teachers get students to demonstrate the target behavior and then monitor their performance. Harmer argues that whatever the reason, teacher needs to help such students build the writing habit so that they recognize writing as being a normal part of classroom practice and they come to writing tasks with as much enthusiasm as they do other activities (2007:329

## **METHOD**

Having conducted preliminary research to identify the problems, the researcher carried out a classroom action research at twelfth grade students of science program in SMA *Negeri 1 Pabelan* Semarang regency which had 26 students. The aim of action research was to solve the problems faced by the students in the teaching and learning process in the classroom and to make improvement of the practice which lead to the positive change.

This action research consisted of three cycles which covered six cycles. The series of cycling activities were planning, acting, observing and reflecting. In planning the action, the researcher prepared lesson plans, instruments, and pictures of local story narrative text. In acting, the researcher implemented the teaching strategy of using pictures of local story narrative text in class XII-science program of SMA Negeri 1 Pabelan from February to March 2013. In observing, the researcher was assisted by a collaborator to observe the results of the implementation of pictures of local story narrative text strategy. Reflection involved an analysis of the results of the action implementation during the cycles. The data obtained in the observing stage were compared to the indicators of the criteria of success which concerned on two aspects: the teaching and learning writing process and the product of the students' practice project. The criteria of success in the process if firstly, 85%-100% students of twelfth graders of science program of SMA *Negeri 1 Pabelan* responded positively during the implementation of pictures of local story narrative text strategy to practice indirect speech. Secondly, 85%-100 students of twelfth graders of science program of *SMA Negeri 1 Pabelan* were motivated during the action. The criteria of success in the product if the students' score and the average score of all students was equal or above the minimum passing criterion, which is 75. (75 are the standard minimum score used in *SMA Negeri 1 Pabelan*, Semarang regency).

The researcher collected two kinds of data, namely numerical data and verbal data. The numerical data were obtained from the results of the students' project. Meanwhile the verbal data was represented by information showing the students' attitude and behavior during the implementation of the strategy. Therefore, the instruments of this study were observation checklist, students' journal, questionnaire, field note, and the results of students' project.

An observation checklist was used to monitor the students' participation and performance during the teaching and learning process through pictures of local story narrative text. Students' journal was an alternative form of gaining written data to get students' feedbacks and responses. Questionnaire was given to students to get information about their feelings, thoughts, or action in learning and practicing indirect speech using pictures of local story narrative text. The researcher used field note to record all information, events, activities, and students' behavior that happened during the teaching and learning process. Students' practice projects were given to get the information of data about students' ability in producing indirect speech. By seeing students' practice project results, the lacks of grammatical rules that the students still had in changing direct speech into indirect speech were found and then improved.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data gained in the preliminary research showed that the student's involvement in the teaching learning process and the result of student's work in changing direct speech into indirect speech in writing narrative text were very poor. The researcher assumed that the students failed to understand and produce the correct indirect speech because they had lack of knowledge and also opportunities to practice.

To be competence and skillful, the students had to be given review about the grammatical knowledge of indirect speech and more opportunities to practice in changing direct speech into indirect speech. The teacher also had to use interesting way or media to draw students' interest and improve students' involvement in teaching learning process. Due the condition, in meeting 1 of each cycle, the teacher taught the grammatical rules of changing direct speech into indirect speech and gave a lot of examples in

applying the rules. In meeting 2 of each cycle, the teacher gave student a project to know about student's ability in mastering the rules using pictures of local story narrative text. The researcher provided some pictures of local story narrative text which were modified using speech balloons. The direct speech was written in speech balloon. The students were given instruction to change the direct speech in the speech balloons into indirect speech. Then the indirect speech that they produced must be filled into the incomplete sentence of the story passage which followed the pictures.

### **Cycle 1**

In the first meeting the result of observation showed that the teaching learning process ran fluently. The action plan worked well. However, based on the result of observation checklist, the students' involvements had not resulted in expected outcome. Generally, the students were not cooperative in the teaching learning process. Many students did not give good responses when the teacher gave motivation and told the learning objective to the class. From the analysis of the result of observation checklist in the cycle 1 in the first meeting the researcher and the collaborator got, the fact showed that the students' activities during the teaching and learning process were not in the criterion of success. Most of students were not active yet in every learning activity.

After a little review was given, the researcher and the collaborator distributed the pictures of local story narrative text which had been completed with indirect speech in the speech balloon. Some instructions were given before the students practiced to produce indirect speech. The result of the students' practice project showed an improvement compared with the pre-cycle. The average score of the result of students' practice in pre-cycle was 41.7. While the average score of the result of students' practice in cycle 1 is 51.4. Nevertheless, the researcher was not satisfied

because the result was not in the criterion of success. It was because the average score of all students was still under the minimum passing criterion, 75 and only three students were above the minimum passing criterion, 75. This meant that the teaching learning process by using of pictures of local story narrative text to improve students' indirect speech practice in writing narrative text had not made a significant improvement yet.

The further analysis revealed that most of students had still lack of knowledge of grammar in changing direct speech into indirect speech. They had mistakes in pronoun and spatial deixis. However, the mistakes of temporal deixis dominated. The researcher found most students still had a lot of difficulties when they should apply a set of backshifts from present tense to past tense and from past tense into past perfect tense. Most students also still failed to change direct speech into indirect speech in *statement*, *question* and *command*. The researcher and the collaborator also found that students had problems with pronoun, adverb of time, adjective, auxiliary, and regular-irregular verb.

### **Cycle 2**

When the observation checklist was conducted in the first meeting in cycle 2, the collaborator observed the students had seemed to involve and participate seriously and actively in the teaching learning process. Most of students had paid attention well when the teacher presented the materials. They had showed big interest in the subject taught. In the middle of explanation, many students even were eager to make interruptions to get better understanding. They also wanted and asked the teacher to give more examples in order to reduce their confusion. Briefly, the students gave positive responses to the teaching learning activities. From the analysis of the result of observation checklist in the cycle 2 in the second meeting, the researcher and the

collaborator got the fact that the students' activities during the teaching and learning process had improved. The students had tried to do their practice projects seriously. Most of them had self confidence to finish their practice projects by themselves.

From the result of students' scores, there was a significant improvement for the average score. It was higher than the average score in cycle 1. The average score in cycle 1 was 51.4 while the average score in cycle 2 was 69.3. Nevertheless, the researcher and the collaborator were satisfied enough yet with the score results. It was because the average score and the students' scores did not meet the criterion of success, 75. The further analysis revealed that most of students had still lack of knowledge of grammar in changing direct speech into indirect speech. They had a lot of mistakes in pronoun deixis, the use of *yes-no* and *wh-* question, adjective, and to infinitive. In cycle 2, most of students gave positive comments about the practice project. They stated that the practice project was a nice study, easy, interesting, and a good job. They liked it. Some of them said that the practice project made them happy, gave them good experiences, and made their English better. It meant, during cycle 2, the students could enjoy the learning process than during cycle 1.

Based on the analysis, it was found that the implementation of the strategy had improved significantly. However, the researcher and the collaborator still were not satisfied with the results because the knowledge of indirect speech grammatical rules that the student had was still low. not met all the criterion of success yet. Considering those the findings in cycle 2, the researcher and the collaborator decided to continue to the next cycle.

### Cycle 3

When the observation checklist was conducted in the first meeting in cycle 3, the result showed that most students had positive and active

participation in all learning activities. All learning activities had met the criterion of success. The percentage of the students' involvement achieved not less than 85%.

In the second meeting, it could be seen that the students' activities during the teaching and learning process using pictures of local story narrative text had also resulted in expected outcome. In doing the practice projects, the students' behavioral changes were in the category very good. Not less than 85% of all students had showed very good behavior. This finding showed that the students' behavior change had met the criterion of success.

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the twelfth graders of science program of SMA *Negeri 1 Pabelan*, Semarang regency in the academic year of 2012/2013 had some problems when they produced indirect speech in writing narrative text. Most of students got some difficulties in pronoun deixis, spatial deixis, and mainly in temporal deixis. Pronoun deixis was a number of adjustments in the reference of first and second person pronouns. Many students still also had difficulties in using personal pronouns (*subject* and *object*), possessive adjectives (*my, your, his, her, its, our, and their*), possessive pronouns (*mine, yours, his/hers, ours, yours, theirs*), and reflective pronouns (*myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, themselves*). Spatial deixis was the shift of pointer words like *this, now, here* and *tomorrow* that should be changed into *that, there, the next day*, and so on. While temporal deixis was the movement from direct quotation to indirect quotation that involves a surprisingly elaborate set of backshifts from present tense to past tense and past tense to past perfect tense.

The implementation of pictures of local story narrative text to improve the students' indirect speech practice in writing narrative text

was generally divided into two main learning phases. Firstly, the students were given knowledge about indirect speech. The students were involved and encouraged in number of learning activities to listen attentively when the teacher gave explanation about indirect speech, to make interruption when they needed to get clearest explanation, to ask questions when they were not clear enough, and to request some more examples to get better understanding. Secondly, the students were given pictures of local story narrative text which were completed by direct speech in the speech balloon. In this phase, the students were practiced to convert the indirect speech in the speech balloon into indirect speech.

The results of the implementation of pictures of local story narrative text to practice indirect speech in this study showed that the students' ability improved during the cycle per cycle was conducted. In the process, the students' behavior also had a tendency in getting better and better from the first action up to the last action. The students had positive responses and they were motivated during the action. It could be seen from the results of the observation checklist, field note, questionnaire, and students' journal.

Based on the information of observation checklist, it was found that the students were active and motivated during the teaching learning process. Observation checklists indicated that most of the students got involved well in each activity. In relation to the students' attitude which was shown from their response in questionnaire, the researcher found that most students gave positive response to the effect that they felt after experiencing teaching and learning process using pictures of local story narrative text to improve their indirect speech practice. While from the students' journal, the researcher concluded that students' interest and motivation also improved. Most of them gave positive comment to the implementation of pictures of local story narrative text strategy. From the field notes, the researcher

got identification of the strengths, weaknesses and suggestions concerning about the setting of the class, the interaction between the teacher and students, and other things that happened in the class during the teaching learning process. In the product, the results of students' projects showed that the achievement of the students was getting improved from cycle to cycle. The improvement of the students' scores had met the criteria of success. Therefore, the researcher could conclude that pictures of local story narrative text could be used as media to teach grammar in writing skill.

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