

**IMPROVING STUDENTS' ABILITY IN MASTERING WRITING THROUGH
CAPITALIZATION, OVERALL, PUNCTUATION, SPELLING (COPS)
STRATEGY TO THE FIRST YEAR STUDENTS
OF SMAN 1 PEUDADA
(A Collaborative Classroom Action Research)**

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ABSTRACT

Writing is one of the ways to give an idea or message form of writing on a piece of paper or any other medium. The problems of the research were; first, How do the first year students of SMAN 1 Peudada improve their ability in mastering writing when the teacher uses COPS strategy? Second, How do the students' response toward the implementation of COPS strategy in learning writing? The purposes of the research were to improve writing ability of the first year students of SMAN 1 Peudada through COPS strategy and to indicate the students' response toward the implementation of COPS strategy in learning writing. This research was designed in collaborative classroom action research. This research was conducted in two cycles through collaborative classroom action research. Each cycle consisted of planning, implementing, observing and reflecting. In cycle I, the action was conducted in three meetings, but it did not succeed yet because the students' mean scores on the result of the test in cycle I only 58. Furthermore, based on the result of observation toward the teacher's and the students' performance during the teaching and learning process, there were many things that should be considered and it did not reach the criteria of success yet. Therefore, the researcher revised the plan and continued to cycle II. In cycle II the action also was conducted in three meetings. After analyzing the data conducted in cycle II, the researcher got the students' mean score had increased became 77. While, the result of observation for the teacher in cycle I was 64% and it did not reach the criteria of success yet, but in cycle II it had improved became 80%. Besides, the result of observation for the students in cycle I was 62, but in cycle II it became 77 and it had reached the criteria of success. Furthermore, based on the result of questionnaire, the researcher got the mean of total score 4, 04 and it was categorized "strongly agree" and it had reached the criteria of success, it meant that the students showed good responses toward the implementation of COPS strategy in writing recount text. Based on the result as presented above, it can be concluded that the researcher had succeed in improving and motivating the students in learning writing recount text through COPS strategy.

Key Words: Writing, Recount Text, Capitalization, Overall, Punctuation, Spelling (COPS) Strategy

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the language skills in learning English where the students express their ideas and thoughts into sentences and paragraphs in order to deliver the message to the reader. For senior high school students, the students must have good capability in writing process so that they could organize their ideas effectively. Writing is one of the four basic language skills which are very complex therefore it is difficult for the students in each level to learn, including for the first year students of SMAN 1 Peudada.

Writing is one of the ways to give an idea or message form of writing on a piece of

paper or any other medium. Through writing, a person could express or deliver the message to the intended readers. It is an act of making marks on certain surface. Moreover, writing is a kind of language expression which is created by particular set of symbols, having conventional values to represent the wordings of particular language which is drawn up visually.

In senior high school level, the students are demanded to be able to write various kinds of text, such as Narrative, Descriptive, Recount, Report, etc. In fact, most of the second year students of SMAN 1 Peudada were still need to improve their skill in writing. The teaching of

writing skill in the classroom seems to require some kinds of teaching strategy that can motivate the students to learn how to write in English.

As required by the 2013 Curriculum of SMAN 1 Peudada the students have to be able to learn how to write in English to express their thought, ideas and feeling in some contexts, either in formal or informal writing. In this context, the students were demanded to write some kind of texts, such as narrative, descriptive, procedure text, etc. According to in the Standard of Minimum Competence (KKM) of SMAN 1 Peudada the students should get the average score 75 to pass the English subject. In fact, most of the students only got the score below the target score. It can be concluded that, the students of SMAN 1 Peudada still had low ability in English especially in writing skill.

It was also found that the English teacher was hardly able to apply an effective teaching strategy to improve the students' ability in writing skill. The teaching and learning process did not make the students motivated in the teaching of writing, because they did not know what to do and how. Because of this the writing class was felt to be less comfortable and aimless. Finding this kind of difficulty, the researcher came to an idea to try to value the situation by introducing a teaching strategy that the researcher believed could help the teacher improve the teaching and learning process.

Toward that aim, the researcher offered a new learning strategy that is used properly and effectively could help the teacher to improve the students' writing ability. The strategy is called Capitalization, Overall, Punctuation and Spelling (COPS). Capitalization, Overall, Punctuation and Spelling (COPS) is a strategy that provides a rationale for learning, and then the students could share results others students after learning this strategy. This strategy would require the students to revise their writing, and solve their problem by correcting the capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and overall their writing.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher chose the title of this research is Improving Students' Ability in Mastering Writing through Capitalization, Overall, Punctuation, Spelling (Cops) Strategy to the first year students of SMAN 1 PEUDADA (A Collaborative Classroom Action Research).

The problems to be addressed by the research are:

1. How do the first year students of SMAN 1 Peudada improve their ability in mastering writing when the teacher uses Capitalization, Overall, Punctuation, Spelling (COPS) Strategy?
2. How do the students' response toward the implementation of Capitalization, Overall, Punctuation, Spelling (COPS) Strategy in learning writing?

Based on the problems of the research, the purposes of the research are:

1. To improve writing ability of the first year students of SMAN 1 Peudada by using Capitalization, Overall, Punctuation, Spelling (COPS) Strategy.
2. To indicate the students' response toward the implementation of Capitalization, Overall, Punctuation, Spelling (COPS) Strategy in learning writing.

According to Flynn and Stainthorp (2006: 23-25), "Writing is a complex process that allows writers to explore thoughts and ideas, and make them visible and concrete". Writing encourages thinking and learning for it motivates communication and makes thought available for reflection. When thought is written down, ideas can be examined, reconsidered, added to, rearranged, and changed easily. Writing is a process of transferring the word that comes from our mind effectively, we can work up to what we really want to inform and write. Students can learn how to write about something in the forms of essay, description, report, etc. by learning writing skill, the students expected to be able to write their ideas out, and at a later stage, to communicate in writing skill with the people abroad. Meanwhile, Elbow (1998: 34) said that "Writing is most likely to encourage thinking and learning when students view writing as a process. By recognizing that writing is a recursive process, and that every writer uses the process in a different way, students experience less pressure to "get it right the first time" and are more willing to experiment, explore, revise, and edit.

One of strategies that is useful for revising a writing is COPS (Capitalization, Overall, Punctuation, Spelling) Strategy. According to Shannon and Polloway (1993: 8) COPS is the acronym for a strategic approach that helps students detect and correct common writing errors. Each letters tends for an aspect of writing that the students need to check for accuracy. It is explained that this strategy is aimed at revising

writing by considering some points when someone writes in error in the writing. This strategy is used by checking four points like Capitalization of a appropriate letters, Overall appearance of paper, Punctuation used correctly, and Spelling accuracy.

The statement is supported by Barbara (2010: 146) explained that COPS strategy is a strategy that helps students to indentify four basic error types. She adds that using this strategy, students can check their writing independently before submitting their work. It is explained that COPS strategy is a strategy used to make good correction on writing. By using this strategy, the writing will be able to remind him or her to check his or her own writing. This strategy is really beneficial that makes student to write independently to write and revising. Furthermore, Greg (2009: 98) stated that COPS is a strategy that provides a rationale for learning, and shares the results with other students after learning this strategy. It is explained that COPS Strategy stimulates the students to think of possible errors in their writing. The students will try to do such activity as checking the errors based on some points, such as the capitalization of the words in the writing, the overall concept of the writing, the punctuation in the writing, and the spelling of the words in the writing.

METHODOLOGY

The design of the research was Collaborative Classroom Action Research. Classroom Action Research is a form of systemic and reflective research conducted by educators or teachers by giving certain action to improve and increase the quality of teaching practices in the classroom in order that practices become more active. In conducting this research, the researcher used Collaborative Classroom Action Research as research design. Asrory (2008: 45) stated that collaborative action research is a kind of classroom action research that involves some people like the principal, teacher. Collaborative Classroom Action Research aims is to improve teaching practical quality, contributed teaching and learning theoretical development or educational and the teaching and learning process of the teacher. This research was taken place at SMAN 1 Peudada. This school was located at Jalan Medan- Banda-Aceh, Bireuen, Aceh Province. The location of this school is very easy to reach and much transportation is available in this area.

The researcher took the subject of the research population were the first year students, while for the specific object or the sample, the researcher took one class, IIA₂. There were consisted 40 students, was divided into 25 female and 15 male.

Research Finding and Discussion

In this cycle, the researcher made some improvements in implementing COPS (Capitalization, Overall, Punctuation, Spelling) strategy, where the researcher has been more selective in choosing the appropriate topic of recount text that would be used during the teaching and learning process. Besides that, in this cycle the researcher tried to give clear instruction and guide the students during the teaching and learning process.

Then, the researcher asked the students to write a recount text under the topic “Holiday”. After the students wrote the text, the researcher asked the students to read the text to check the meaning of the text. After that, the researcher interrogated the students by using some points of COPS (Capitalization, Overall, Punctuation, Spelling) strategy. First, the researcher interrogated the students by asking “Have you Capitalized the first word and all proper nouns?”. Second, “How is the Overall appearance?”. Third “Have you used end Punctuation, commas, and semicolon correctly?”. The last, “Do the words looks like they are Spelled right, can you sound them out, or should you use the dictionary?”.

After interrogating the students by using some points of COPS(Capitalization, Overall, Punctuation, Spelling) strategy, the researcher asked the students to check and revise their writing based on the points. After revising their writing, the researcher asked the students to take the paper to their friend to proofread. Finally, the researcher asked the students to execute a final copy of the recount that they wrote and then reread it as a final time before they submitted to the researcher.

At the end of the study, the researcher took the conclusion about the material taught in this meeting. Besides that, the researcher asked the students’ difficulties in the material given in this meeting. Then, the researcher asked the students to study hard at home, then closing the first meeting.

In the second meeting, the researcher gave the chance to the students to choose the topic freely in writing a recount text. After

writing, the researcher asked the students to reread the text for the meaning. Then, the researcher interrogated the students by using the COPS (Capitalization, Overall, Punctuation, Spelling) strategy. First, the researcher asked the students “Have you capitalized the first word and all proper nouns?” if there was no appropriate capitalization on their writing then the students should correct it. Second the researcher asked the students “How is the Overall appearance? If they felt the overall appearance was not coherence then the students should revise it. Third, the researcher asked the students “Have you used end punctuation, commas, and semicolon correctly?” in this step, the students checked the using of punctuation. The last, the researcher asked the students “Do the words look like they are spelled right, can you sound them out, or should you use the dictionary?” in this step, the students checked the vocabulary used in the text.

After checking all the points proposed in COPS (Capitalization, Overall, Punctuation, Spelling) strategy, the students revised some errors that found on their writing. Then, the researcher asked the students to take the paper to someone else to proofread. Finally, the researcher asked the students to execute a final copy and reread a final time of the text that they had written.

At the end of the meeting, the researcher asked the students to submit their work. Then, the researcher took the conclusion about the material given in this meeting. After that, the researcher asked the students’ difficulties and corrected the students’ mistakes while writing the recount text. Then, the researcher told to the students if they would get a test on the next meeting, so the researcher suggested them to study hard at home so that they would get the best score.

In the third researcher started and greeted the students “good morning class, are you okay today?”. “We are okay miss” answered the students. Then, the researcher checked the students’ attendance list. The activity on this meeting focused on giving the test to the students. Before giving the test, the researcher gave a chance to the students to tell their difficulties in comprehending and writing recount text. Through the activity, the researcher hoped all of students could master the recount text, so that they could get the best score.

Then, the researcher asked the students to write a recount text under the topic “Telling Experience”. After the students wrote the text, the researcher asked the students to read the text to check the meaning of the text. After that, the researcher interrogated the students by using some points of COPS (Capitalization, Overall, Punctuation, Spelling) strategy. First, the researcher interrogated the students by asking “Have you Capitalized the first word and all proper nouns?”. Second, “How is the Overall appearance?”. Third “Have you used end Punctuation, commas, and semicolon correctly?”. The last, “Do the words look like they are Spelled right, can you sound them out, or should you use the dictionary?”.

After interrogating the students by using some points of COPS (Capitalization, Overall, Punctuation, Spelling) strategy, the researcher asked the students to check and revise their writing based on the points. After revising their writing, the researcher asked the students to take the paper to their friend to proofread. Finally, the researcher asked the students to execute a final copy of the recount that they wrote and then reread it as a final time before they submitted to the researcher.

After all of the students finishing their work, the researcher spread the questionnaire and asked the students to give the answer honestly. The questionnaire given was written in Indonesian language to make the students easier in giving the answer. Besides that, the researcher did not allow the students to write their name on the questionnaire sheet so that they could answer it freely and honestly. Then, after all of the students gave their answer on questionnaire sheet, the researcher asked the students to submit it.

Before closing the meeting, the researcher asked the students’ difficulties during the teaching and learning process. Then, the researcher took the conclusion and gave some suggestions to the students, and asked them to learn more to increase their English, especially in writing skill.

Analysis of the Researcher Performance during the Action of Cycle 2

The analysis of teaching and learning process was done based on information obtained from the observation checklist and field note. The information was about the teacher’s and the students’ activities in the class during the implementation of COPS (Capitalization,

Overall, Punctuation, Spelling) strategy in teaching writing. Most of the students had shown some improvement, especially in writing skill.

Based the observation conducted during the teaching and learning process by using COPS (Capitalization, Overall, Punctuation, Spelling) strategy in the second cycle on the students' side, it was found that most of the students were able to express their idea in written form. They did their best to write the recount text based on the topic given. Furthermore, most of the students also write the text well, using good English, grammar, word choice, language use, tenses and better punctuation.

On the researcher's side, the researcher controlled and guided the students' well during the teaching and learning process. The researcher also had succeeded to motivate the students in writing recount text through COPS (Capitalization, Overall, Punctuation, Spelling) strategy. Based on the result as presented above, it could be concluded that the implementation of COPS (Capitalization, Overall, Punctuation, Spelling) strategy in teaching and learning recount text in cycle II had showed some improvements and it had reached the criteria of success.

The analysis of the students' learning process was done based on the result of the students' performance in writing recount text. The mean score of students' achievement in writing recount text was 77, it was categorized well, and it had reached the criteria of success yet. The score above showed the students' improvement in writing skill during the implementation of COPS (Capitalization, Overall, Punctuation, Spelling) strategy. Based on the analysis of questionnaire result presented above, the researcher found that the students' perception toward the implementation of COPS (Capitalization, Overall, Punctuation, Spelling) strategy was 4, 04 and it was categorized "strongly agree" and reached the criteria of success. In addition, the researcher had been successful in implementing COPS (Capitalization, Overall, Punctuation, Spelling) strategy in motivating the students in teaching and learning writing, especially in writing recount text.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

1. After implementing the Capitalization, Overall, Punctuation, Spelling (COPS) Strategy in teaching and learning writing,

the researcher found that the students' writing ability had improved. In first cycle, the students' average score was 58, while in the second cycle it had reached 77, it meant that after the teacher revised the plan and made some improvements, the students' writing ability had improved well.

2. After analyzing the data conducted from the result of questionnaire, the researcher got the mean score 4, 04 or "strongly agree". So, it meant that Capitalization, Overall, Punctuation, Spelling (COPS) Strategy is an appropriate strategy to be applied by the teacher in motivating the students during teaching and learning process.

From the explanation above, the researcher concluded that the research was successful, it could be seen from the result of the test in second cycle where it had increased from 58 to 77 and it had reached the criteria of success. Furthermore, based on the result of questionnaire, the researcher got the mean score 4, 04 or "strongly agree" it shown that students were motivated in learning writing especially in writing narrative text by using Capitalization, Overall, Punctuation, Spelling (COPS) Strategy.

Suggestion

1. The researcher hopes that the teacher can use Capitalization, Overall, Punctuation, Spelling (COPS) Strategy in improving and motivating the students in teaching and learning process, not only in writing skill but also in other skills.
2. The researcher hopes the students to improve their vocabulary and master the grammar so that it would make them easier in writing English text.
3. The researcher hopes the next researcher can find more appropriate and interested learning strategy to improve the students' ability and motive them in learning English.

At the end of the research, the researcher had some suggestions for the teacher, the students and also for the next researcher as presented above. By reading this research, the researcher really hoped that it could be a new reference for the teacher in teaching writing by using Capitalization, Overall, Punctuation, Spelling (COPS) Strategy. Besides that, the researcher also hoped that this research could be an alternative for the students in comprehending the recount text, while for the next researcher it could be a motivation to find a new and

appropriate learning strategy in conducting the research.

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