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CREATIVE WRITING LEARNING IN NATURE SCHOOL 2017

Vedia[1], Emzir[2]

State Senior High School 5 Tangerang City[1]
Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia[2]
bundavedia@gmail.com[1]
emzir.pb@gmail.com[2]

Abstract

This study was aimed to get a picture of creative writing learning in the 4th grade of Sekolah AlamTangerang. This research used an ethnography method. The data were collected through observation, documentation, and interview. The research showed that: (1) The type of syllabus used was a syllabus referring to the SAT curriculum and national curriculum. (2) The formulation of learning objectives was the maturity in creative writing. (3) The materials developed by the teachers included learning to write journal or book report, poem, comic, and article. (4) The strategies, approaches, methods, and techniques used refer to experience from the natural environment. (5) The roles of teachers and students in learning were equally important. (6) The most important infrastructures and learning media were nature-based. (7) The evaluation system used was more concerned with daily assessment. Overall, the creative learning process at the 4th grade of Sekolah Alam Tangerang forms its own cultural theme; that is nature-based learning.

Keywords: creative writing, ethnography, nature-based learning

Language learning in primary schools is essentially a matter of great importance. It can be said that language is the way to learn life and to life. It takes skill to be able to pour the ideas, in the form of language. There are four kinds of language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Among the four skills, writing skills are the most attention-getting skills because writing skills are highly dependent on the other language skills. Writing skills are important as suggested by Mills, "Writing as art helps us to recognize the voices, images, worlds, and stories we inhabit - and which inhabit us - in other words, our acquired culture" (Mills, 2006). In this case, Mills said that writing is very useful to be able to remember the sounds, pictures, the worlds, and the stories in other words to get to know our culture.

There are several kinds of writing skills, one of which is creative writing. Creative writing is a creative thought. Creative thinking certainly does not get in the way. It needs knowledge, creativity and imagination. Khoiri argues, "To be creative (writing), in addition to knowledge or broad insight, people desperately need the power of imagination" (Khoiri, 2014).

Creative writing comes from creative thinking. Creative thinking is owned by a creative writer as well. Writing sources for creative writers can be anything and come from anywhere. As Carter puts it in the introduction to the book Creating Writers A creative writing manual for schools, "The material in Creating Writers comes from a variety of sources"(Carter, 2001). From this statement Carter argued that creative writing can come from a variety of sources.

Creative writing learning activities follows the steps as writing activities in general, which are the stage of pre-writing, compilation, revise, edit, share, and publication. As suggested by Graves and quoted by, "The most common process advocated for the teaching of writing involves prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, sharing, and publishing"(Reinhartz and Beach, 1997).

Creative writing will work well if a plan has been prepared to implement it. Therefore, the creative learning writing syllabus needs to be prepared. This is in accordance with what said, "Syllabus describes the major elements that will be used in planning a language course and provides the basis for instructional focus and content" (Richards, 2005). .Richards in his opinion argued that the syllabus of language learning, in general, is a description of what is required in language learning and provides a focus of learning design and content.

Another thing that also needs to be considered in creative writing learning is the purpose of learning. The purpose of creative writing learning is to make students have the ability to pour ideas in the form of writing. According to A. Chapple (1977: 1), as quoted by Dawson:

In Creative Writing in the Primary School, the school teacher defines 'creative writing' as 'that written expression in which children put down their own ideas, thoughts, feelings and impressions in their own words. It is writing that is original as opposed to imitative. It is sincere, personal expression that is flavoured by the personality of the child (Dawson, 2005).

So creative writing gives a person a chance to get the freedom of imagination. Even students can develop a deeper linguistic ability that he could not initially deliver verbally.

In the process of creative writing learning, it requires an approach, strategy, methods, and techniques so the learning process itself can run well and achieve the maximum results. In the Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation (2014: 3) it is mentioned that, "The approach is the educator's perspective used to create a learning environment that enables the learning process and the achievement of defined competencies."

Meanwhile, strategy can be defined as learning plan that will be done from the chosen approach to achieve the learning objectives. Richard said, "A strategic plan is the description of the long-term vision and goals of an institution and the means it's undertakes for fulfilling them" (Richards, 2005). Here Richards disclosed that the strategic plan is a description of the vision and purpose of an institution and has the intention of fulfilling that purpose.

In a learning process, it is also required a method so the learning can be done properly. Hamalik stated, "Methods are the means used to deliver the subject matter in an effort to achieve the curriculum goals" (Hamalik,2014) The actual method speaks of "how" while the syllabus speaks of "what". As proposed by Nunan, "Broadly speaking syllabuses specify the 'what' of teaching whereas methodology specify the 'how'(Nunan, 1997).

Besides approaches, strategies, and methods in learning process, techniques should be paid attention as well. As Sanjaya put it, "Techniques are the ways in which a person implements a method(Sanjaya, 2008)"

Teachers have an important role in a learning process. Even S. Nasution said, "The most important educational tool is the teacher himself" (Nasution, 2015). Meanwhile, according to Akkaya, "there are several teacher roles in creative writing learning, they are: the teacher should be able to be a facilitator, a good motivator so the students will actively take their role"(Akkayaa,2014).

While the role of students as stated in Law No. 20 of 2013, students must experience all stages of learning as advocated by UNESCO which is further known as the 4 pillars of education, "learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, learning to be."

Facilities and infrastructures in creative writing can be drawn from a variety of sources, whether it is teacher's own product or indeed a product that can be purchased. As proposed by Nunan (1997: 81), "Materials come in many shapes and formats. The most obvious distinction is between local materials produced by a teacher for her class, and which are commercially produced."

When all of the learning elements have been done, it is necessary to evaluate as suggested by Dunsworth and Billings: "Program evaluation provides school leaders with the information they need

to make good decisions about programs, practices, and strategies in use or being considered for use at a school or district"(Dunsworth and Billings ,2012).

From the statement above, it is clear that evaluation is important to be able to answer the various questions that are the problems in education. The problem is certainly the result of efforts to improve the quality of education.

About the natural school that became the object of this study actually has a rationale from the beginning of the establishment of the school. Among them is Surah Al Araf: 172 which states that human beings can think even when they still in the womb. When humans are born in to the world, humans will think critically of what happens to themselves and the environment. With this critical thinking ability, humans can judge which one is good which one is bad, which one is needed, which one does not. As expressed by Freire, "Man is always in contact with the outside world critically. They understand objective data (as well as link between one data and another) through reflection and not just as reflexes as animals do.(Freire, 2001)"

Education is also expected to give beneficial impacts to anyone without discrimination, whether it is gender, race, or rich or poor. For learners who have sufficient ability, they will certainly have a clear purpose of education for them. But for the less sufficient students who prefer to fulfill their primer needs for food, of course they will ask a question of what the importance of education for them. This is stated by Illich: "Many students, especially those who are poor, intuitively know the schoolsdo for them.(Illich,1972)" Based on his statement, Ivan Illich's demands a useful education for anyone not limited to the obligation to go to school.

In Indonesia, the nature-based school was spearheaded by Lendonovo who not only wanted to form an intellectual generation, but also pious generation. The purpose of education according to nature-based schools in Indonesia as stated by Septriana is "Create *khalifatullah*. The school curriculum has one major 'outcome' of creating *khalifatullah fil ardi*"(Septriana, 2009). The word *alam* (nature) in the phrase *Sekolah Alam* has two meanings. As suggested by Suhendi and Septriana is *alam* (nature) means experience and *alam* (nature) means the universe, the creatures, everything that Allah created(Suhendi and Septriana ,2012).

Nature-based school begins from the desire to provide a sense of comfortable learning outdoors while make the students to be close to the natural surroundings. As disclosed by Damarest the benefit of outdoor learning is that can make students more familiar with their life. "Place-based learning brings students out of black and white books into a full-spectrum world of color"(Damarest,2015) Even according to Damarest, by learning outdoors students will experience more, not limited to just one or two things.

To start the research, the researchers reviewed other researches which are relevant.They are: a thesis conducted by Ristiani Musyarofah entitled "*EfektivitasSekolahAlam (StudiKasus di SDIT Alam Jogjakarta, 2004)*" and the study of young researchers of the Padjajaran University entitled "*Kreativitas Sekolah Alam Bandung*" in 2007. In addition, the other relevant researches were taken from the following journals: Mirjana Radivic, "Creative Education and New Learning as Means of Encouraging Creativity", "Original Thinking and Entrepreneurship", Markovic, 2015, and Ahmed A. Osman, "Freedom in Teaching and Learning", Moi University, School of Education, 2013.

This study will look more deeply at the Indonesian language learning process especially the aspect of creative writing skills in the nature-based school. This is chosen by researchers because creative writing is the result of creative thinking. From fun writing creative activities, it will create excitement writing in other forms. Fourth grade was chosen by the researchers under the consideration that the fourth grade is the beginning of high classes which is also a class whose writing stage already requires higher writing skills.

In addition, the creative writing skill becomes an interesting thing to observe because while in many schools this skill becomes difficult for teachers and students, in nature-based schools it is not

so. It is seen from some nature-based school students who are able to write creatively with a unique word choice. Students' works are enshrined in the form of memorable or anthological books for school work. Furthermore, the students' works are contained in the *KKPK* (*Kecil-Kecil Punya Karya)*—a collection of children published stories. There are also students who already have their own blog and load his works. Even students who have graduated from nature-based school still continue their hobby of writing by trying to make novels.

The way of nature-based school invites children to observe the natural surroundings and then report in the form of oral and written is a learning process that needs to know more about how the actual learning process happen. For that purpose, the focus of this research is "Creative Writing Learning at Sekolah Alam Tangerang which is an ethnographic research in Grade IV of Sekolah Alam Tangerang", with the sub focus of the research are: syllabus forms, objective formulas, materials, approaches, strategies, methods, and techniques, the roles of teachers and students, facilities and instructional media, and evaluation systems used in creative writing learning.

METHOD

This research used qualitative approach with ethnography method. This method was selected in order to obtain an accurate picture of the learning process and how the pattern of learning process developed in the school environment being researched.

The data collected in this research consisted of: syllabus type; objective formulation; materials; strategies, approaches, methods, and techniques; roles of teachers and students; facilities, infrastructures, and media; and evaluation systems used in creative writing learning. The sources of data in this study were extracted from: the events; informants; and documents in creative writing learning at Sekolah Alam Tangerang. Data collection techniques used in this study were observations, interviews, and document analysis.

The data were analyzed using Spradley Model Analysis (1980), i.e., domain analysis, taxonomic analysis, component analysis, and theme analysis.

To ensure the credibility of the data, this study used the examination techniques that become the reference to draw conclusions by using extension techniques of participation, perseverance, and triangulation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the research conducted at the *Sekolah Alam Tangerang*(henceforth SAT), some findings were found, which become the data from research questions aforementioned in chapter one covering seven aspects of sub-foci and explained as follows.
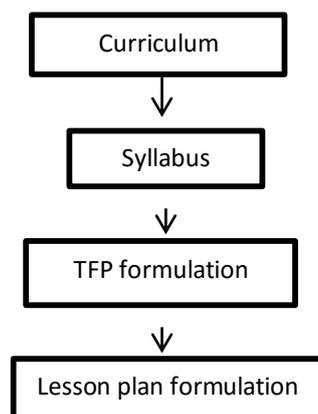
1. Type of syllabus used in the creative writing learning at fourth grade,Sekolah Alam Tangerang

The syllabus of Indonesian language including the creative writing learning used at fourth grade of SAT was made by the teachers. It was then developed to the form of lesson plan (*RPP*) made by the teachers as well. Besides referring to the syllabus, the teachers also referred to Theme Fact Principle (henceforth TFP). TFP contains several themes formulated by the teachers related to the school surroundings and given to the students.

In the syllabus document of Indonesian language itself, it was found that the learning at Sekolah Alam Tangerang was thematic; similar to the common framework in other schools. However, this thematic learning is done fully natural. There are many components contained in it including: personal domain within which the sub-domains include the supporting verses, objectives, learning activity statements, learning theme, students' tasks, assessment, tools and materials, reference, and time allocation.

Other components included in the lesson plan at Sekolah Alam Tangerang comprise: lesson plan identity, content outline, learning objective and indicator, learning method, creative principle, learning procedure, and evaluation.

As what have been stated before that from curriculum, syllabus, TFP, to lesson plan, they become one set that should be done by the teachers at Sekolah Alam Tangerang. As a result, it can be suggested that the syllabus development at Sekolah Alam Tangerang done by them conforms to the following procedure.

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 │   TFP formulation  │
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│ Lesson plan formulation  │
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Picture 3: The Procedure of Syllabus Development at Sekolah Alam Tangerang

Fundamentally, the learning process at Sekolah Alam Tangerang is formulated on the basis of experience-based learning. It covers four processes including: tasking (giving assignment), behaving (accomplishing assignment), experiencing (obtaining experience), and learning learning from experience). Besides, the learning at Sekolah Alam Tangerang is integrated to the character building through regulating four domains, which comprise: 1. Islamic personality, 2. Maturity competence, 3. Ecosystem, and 4. Imamah (Leadership).

2. **The formulation of learning objectives on creative writing at fourth grade,Sekolah Alam Tangerang**

Based on the syllabus, the formulation of language learning objectives was not specifically about creative writing learning. However, some objectives were found linear to the objective of creative writing learning, which comprise: recognizing punctuations' functions, writing holiday journals, being able to define a problem, estimating alternatives, solutions and risks that should be drawn, expressing ideas in either spoken or written forms, being able to write a letter, noting down the obtained information, and being able to write a poem. The formulation of learning objectives on creative writing at fourth grade of Sekolah Alam Tangerang was also suited with the aim of Sekolah Alam Tangerang itself holistically stating that the purpose is to create mature generation. Therefore, the main purpose of creative writing learning is to achive students' maturity in creative writing reviewed from the students' competencies in expressing their ideas in a number of literary writings and producing own work.

3. **Learning materials developed by the teachers in creative writing learning at fourth grade, Sekolah Alam Tangerang**

The learning materials for creative writing at fourth grade,Sekolah Alam Tangerang cover the learning to write an observation report, article, poem, comic, and journal/book report. However, the materials are not delivered theoretically, rather through the presentation of a series of activities that can promote students' experience in obtaining the knowledge.

The developed materials were based on the characteristics of fourth-grade students at Sekolah Alam Tangerang. Considering their characteristics which are generally categorized as The Explorer, the language learning themes are suited with the materials that can be explored by the students in the learning process. In creative writing learning, the themes selected by the teachers are those associated to environment including air, water, and its pollution. For example, the students are given an article from which they are encouraged to look at the air pollution in the school's surroundings.

4. **Learning approach, strategy, method, and technique on creative writing at fourth grade, Sekolah Alam Tangerang**

At this school (Sekolah Alam Tangerang), the students learn not only in nature, but also to nature. Thus, they will get direct experiences. In the learning process, they often feel that they are going around or playing, whereas indirectly they are also learning.

Through such learning process, it can be said that the learning approach, strategy, method, and technique used are all nature-based. It means that the creative writing learning is administered naturally emphasizing on the exposure of direct experience for the students.

5. **Teachers' and students' roles in the creative writing learning at fourth grade, Sekolah Alam Tangerang**

The teachers' roles in creative writing learning at fourth grade, Sekolah Alam Tangerang are more on becoming motivator and facilitator. Besides, they also become manager in the classroom as well as evaluator for the sake of students' success.Meanwhile, the students' roles are participating actively in following the learning activities, seeking for experiences to obtain the knowledge. The students actively observe, question, associate, and analyze along the learning process guided by the teachers as well as make a conclusion of what they have got from every activity.

6. **Facilities, infrastructures, and learning media of creative writing**

The main facilities and learning media of creative writing at fourth grade, Sekolah Alam Tangerang are from the surroundings, yet it does not mean that Sekolah Alam Tangerang does not recognize technology. The use of nature-based facilities, infrastructures, and learning is differentiated from the space-based ones.

The nature-based ones include: school's environment such as fond, well, yard, and outbond area. While school's surroundings include road, village, stalls, and other places.While the space-based ones include: worksheet, LCD, laptop, computer, learning CD, library, textbooks, internet access, and others.

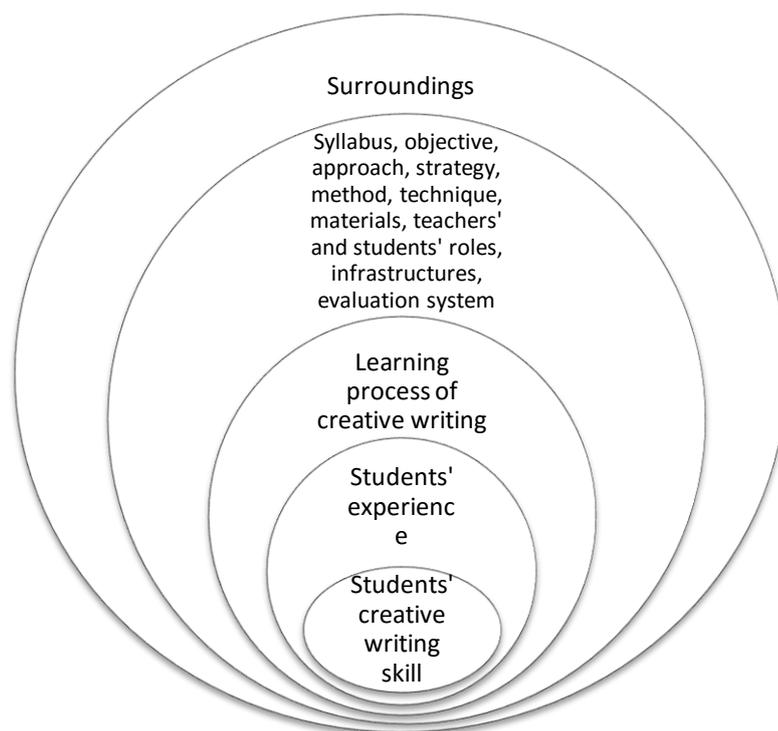7. **Evaluation in the creative writing learning at fourth grade, Sekolah Alam Tangerang**

Evaluation in the creative writing learning at Sekolah Alam Tangerangemphasizes more on the authentic assessment process. Mid-and-final-semester exams are also administered; however, they do not become the major ones. Daily assessment is done by the teachers in order to see the students' skill within a learning process.

Based on those circumstances, it can be concluded that the syllabus used for the creative writing learning at fourth grade, Sekolah Alam Tangerang was developed by the teachers under the principle of the school's curriculum. The learning objectives of creative writing also refer to the syllabus in which they emphasize on the maturity of creative writing itself; that is being able to express ideas in a number of literary works and produce own work. The learning materials of creative writing include learning to write book report or journal, poem, comic, and article, but not taught theoretically, rather direct exposure of experience. So, the students obtain the knowledge about creative writing.

The approach, strategy, method, and technique used for creative writing learning refer to the direct exposure of learning experience from the surroundings, so that they can draw a conclusion from the activities done. The teachers' roles in this kind of learning are more as motivator and

facilitator to get the students willing to search and seek the learning experiences autonomously. Furthermore, the main infrastructures in the creative writing learning are from the surroundings. And, the evaluation system used is emphasizing on the process, rather than the result; so that daily assessment is used.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the whole process of creative writing learning at fourth grade, Sekolah Alam Tangerang establishes its own thematic culture; that is nature-based learning. The following picture figures out the process.

Picture 8: Learning culture of nature-based creative writing at Sekolah Alam Tangerang

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the following points are the conclusion that can be drawn based on the foci and sub-foci of the findings.

First, type of syllabus used for creative writing learning at fourth grade, Sekolah Alam Tangerang is the one referring to both school and national curricula. The syllabus contains personality domain within which the sub-domains include the supporting verses, objectives, learning activity statements, learning theme, students' tasks, assessment, tools and materials, reference, and time allocation. Besides referring to the syllabus, the teachers also referred to Theme Fact Principle (henceforth TFP), and based on both components, the teachers, then, formulate the lesson plan.

Second, the formulation of learning objectives on creative writing at fourth grade, Sekolah Alam Tangerang is arranged in accordance with the school's aim holistically. The main learning objective of creative writing is how the learning process can encourage students' language maturity.

Third, the developed materials for teaching creative writing at fourth grade, Sekolah Alam Tangerang include the learning to write book report/journal, comic, and article. The materials are not delivered explicitly regarding a particular theory or concept in which the teacher do not depend majorly on one textbook, rather many sources used. The students, therefore, are encouraged to be accustomed to autonomy upon what they are learning.

Fourth, the approach, strategy, method, and technique used by the teachers in creative writing learning at fourth grade, Sekolah Alam Tangerang are various. Although the teachers are not from educational background, in practice, they are able to implement a number of strategies, approaches, methos, and techniques, whereas they cannot explicitly differentiate those terms.

Fifth, the teachers' and students' roles in creative writing learning at fourth grade, Sekolah Alam Tangerangare important respectively.Moreover, at this school, parents and environment also have the same important roles. Thus, at this school, all involved in the process of education implementation play active roles to establish a learning community. Teachers take roles as motivator and facilitator in order to get the students participate actively.

Sixth, the main infrastructures as well as learning media utilized by the teachers in teaching creative writing at fourth grade, Sekolah Alam Tangerang are the natural resources themselves. However, it does not mean that this school is anti-technology. There is just a differentiation between nature-based facilities and space-based facilities.

Seventh, the evaluation system used in creative writing learning at fourth grade, Sekolah Alam Tangerang does not only rely on mid-and-final-term exams. Daily assessment plays a crucial role among all evaluation processes. This is because the school regards evaluation as a process. Thus, the authentic or natural assessment is used.

This nature-based creative writing learning can become one of the alternatives in learning writing at elementary schools or other educational levels to promote fun learning for the students. As a result, the goal is to get the students able to produce various literary works.

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