MALL as an Alternative Learning Strategy to Solve Students' Problems in Writing Recount Text

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Abstract—**This study attempts to discover the problems that the students encounter during writing recount text by employing qualitative case study design. The data were obtained from the writing sample of a grade XI student from one of a public high school in Kadipaten, West Java. Applying the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) perspective to analyze the data in order to realize the meaning of the text, this study showed that the student generally make some common mistakes in writing, including grammatical and mechanical errors. From the SFL point of view, it was also found that there is a lack of register in the student's writing as can be seen from the analysis of three metafunctions. Therefore, to help them solving their writing problems, Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) approach is proposed in this study, under several considerations including the mobility, the continuous access across different context of use, also the potential of autonomous learning for the students provided by this approach. However, there are also some challenges need to be considered before teachers decide to implement this approach in the classroom practice, such as the distraction, the appropriate strategy to be used, and the best way to take this approach from informal to formal context.**

Keywords—analysis writing; mobile technology; project-based learning; Systemic Functional Linguistic; transitivity

I. INTRODUCTION

Teaching writing to students and understanding their writing are two big issues that cannot be separated from one another. In order to teach writing effectively, teachers need to understand the challenges that the students encountered during writing, as well as trying to grasp the meaning of the text written by their students. In Indonesia, teaching writing has been included in the curriculum along with the considerations and purposes that need to be achieved. The latest curriculum implemented in Indonesia focus on the collaborative learning which emphasizes on the process-based curriculum to enhance the creativity of the learners [1]. By implementing this approach in the recent curriculum, learners are guided to develop a reading habit and to understand the text in order to reconstruct the text with their own language [1].

However, there are some factors need to be considered before implementing this approach as the curriculum requires the teacher to emphasize teaching the language skill as a communication tool [1]. Mobile-assisted Language Learning (MALL) can be an alternative learning strategies for the

teachers to be implemented in the classroom in order to achieve the goals set by the government. Since MALL is considered as a new way of learning language by integrating mobile technologies into the learning process [2,3], it is an appropriate strategy to encourage the students to be more creative and engage more in the learning by giving emphasize on the interaction with peers and the teachers.

However, before teachers deciding to implement this learning strategy in the writing classroom, they need to know what kind problems their students face during the writing. Therefore, teachers can use systemic functional grammar or systemic functional linguistic (SFL) approach to analyse them. According to Gardner, SFL focus on how the written texts interpret the meanings [4]. Furthermore, SFL perspective is considered fruitful with the lexicogrammatical which is the attainment of registers, and the registers are important in genres [5]. However, it can be a great challenge in writing a genre for the learners who are not familiar with academic register, where they encounter the difficulty in the linguistic aspect [6].

Due to those arguments, this paper attempts to analyze the recount text written by student in grade XI of one of public schools in Kadipaten, West Java, and find out the errors and mistakes that the student usually encounter in writing this kind of text. Not only in terms of generic structure and language features, the analysis will also be done from the SFL perspectives.

A. Recount Text Under SFL Perspectives

Recount text is one of the text types that have been learned since the early stage of education. It is grounded from the statement by Thompson who mentions that recount text is one of the personal text genres in which it reports specific events chronologically, thus it is better learned by the students since their early stage of education [7].

It is a common knowledge that in analyzing a text, understanding the basic framework is essential because each text presents different features that will lead to a different analysis. Therefore, knowing the basic elements in recount text is crucial before taking further steps toward analyzing the text itself. There are some basic elements of recount text that should be recognized, including: orientation, series of events,

and re-orientation. These basic elements comprise the generic structure of the recount text.

Moreover, as a text comprises of different characteristics, it also presents different meanings depending on how the writer construct the text, and it cannot be separated from the common mistakes such as the grammatical error and any other kind of mistakes and error in the process of writing. Also, in analyzing text, we need to consider the actual intention of the writer when they write the information in the text. Because sometimes what we interpret from their texts is different from what they actually want to convey in their writing. Therefore, analyzing their texts from the perspective of SFL is important as it offers a framework in analyzing the language choices comprise the meanings in a text [5].

Schleppegrell mentions that language always interprets from the social experiences, both its commonality and individuality [6]. Therefore, any genres in language are extremely diverse in a sense of its actual realization [7]. Furthermore, Derewianka states that the language type in a text can be determine by: the tenor (direct the text into interpersonal meaning related with the relationship of the participants) [8], the field (direct the text to the ideational meaning related with the subject-matter), and the mode (direct the text to the textual meaning which is highly related with the channel of communication). Those three factors mentioned above is what we call register and usually become the set of pattern in Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL).

Furthermore, Thompson offers framework to analyze a text using three metafunctions including interpersonal, experiential, and textual metafunction [7]. Interpersonal meaning of a text related with the exchange of information in the particular text which aims to give and demand information [7]. The interpersonal meaning deciphers the dimension of tenor in the text. It is highly concerned with the relationship of participants in the text. It can be analyzed from the Mood and speech roles of the text [7]. Meanwhile experiential metafunction describes the clause into three functional components: Participants, Process and Circumstance [9]. It is conveyed through the transitivity, which is highly related with the type of process in a clause [10]. Last, analyzing the textual metafunction of a text means analyzing what information does the writers or the speakers want to convey to the audiences in a way that the texts are coherently organized, and there is a need of a closer look at the Thematization of a clause to analyze it [7].

Therefore, SFL is believed to be a useful framework to analyze the recount text. In this case, transitivity can be used to analyze the text as it is related with the dimension of field [10]. As in recount text the language features include the use of action verbs which realize the material process, the use of specific participants, and the circumstance of time and place, all of them can be inspected through transitivity [10].

B. *Mobile-Assisted Language Learning to Teach Writing*

There have been many studies recently conducted on the technology-integrated learning, and MALL is considered as one of the emerging trend in this field since it uses the affordable and sophisticate technology, the mobile devices (i.e mobile phones, smartphones, iPad, etc.) which becomes popular nowadays among the learners in various level of education [11]. Implementing MALL can be beneficial to meet the recent demand of creative, innovative, and interactive means of teaching. One thing to ensure its benefit is from the mobility of the devices use in MALL, which enables the learners to learn independently in anytime and anywhere [3,12]

Furthermore, MALL has also recently becomes famous as a strategy to help the learners to improve their writing. Some scholars have proven that using MALL to teach writing helps the learners to enhance their writing ability[13,14], since MALL provides them with a wide access of materials they can use for their writing [2,15].

However, although some studies showed the positive impact of utilizing MALL to improve students' writing, there are some factors that the tacher should consider before applying this strategy. It includes the pedagogical aspects and the access of the technology [16], which is very crucial for the learners, since this strategy could not be applied if the learners do not have the access towards the technology.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study was a qualitative study using document analysis as the research design. Since this study attempts to find out the problems faced by the students in grade XI of one of the public schools in Kadipaten., West Java, in writing recount text, the sample of student's writing was collected as the data. It was purposively chosen from the student which represents the general problems that they encountered during writing a recount text. Sample of a recount text writing entitled Holiday to Sumedang was obtained from the students' work. Then, it was analyzed through the perspective of SFL according to the framework by Thompson [7]. It includes the analysis of three metafunctions; the interpersonal, experiential, and textual metafunctions. Furthermore, an alternative solution was proposed to provide an approach that can be used by the teacher in handling the problems encountered by the students. The approach proposed in this study was reviewed and selected to meet the needs of leaners in this 21st century, as well as to help the teacher in implementing a flexible learning material that can be applied to different learners of different backgrounds.

III. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

A. *Challenges Faced by Students in Writing Recount Text*

Grounding from the explanation on the definition of recount text, as well as the characteristics of this text type, some mistakes and errors were found in the student's work on recount text writing. The current analysis of student's text comprises of the analysis of basic elements of recount text, the generic structure, as well as the language features and the social function. The text was also analyzed from the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL).

1) Analysis of students' recount text from social function, generic structure and language features: Based on the analysis on the social function, generic structure, and language

features of the student's writing, there are some points that need to be addreesed as the findings:

- The text has already indicated that the student has actually understand that recount text aims to tell the readers about something she has experienced in the past as she was trying to tell the readers about what she was doing when she visited Sumedang when she was in sixth grade

- Despite the lack of re-orientation part, which is optional, it can be said that the student is already aware of the generic structures of recount text in general.

- In terms of language features, the writer can actually manage to use the proper tense based on the context of her writing, but sometimes there is a confusion in choosing the verb to be used to indicate the intended tense she wanted to use in the sentence

2) Analysis of student's recount text from the three metafuctions: The three metafunctions of SFL were used to analyze the recount text of the student, including the interpersonal, experiential and textual meanings. The analysis and discussion of the student's text through the SFL perspective are presented below:

a) Interpersonal metafunction: Interpersonal meanings comprises with Mood and Modality. In analyzing Mood, two elements are essential, Subject and Finite, as the presence of those two elements will distinguish the type of Mood in a text [7]. In the sample of student's recount text, the Mood found in all clauses is declarative Mood. However, there was a confusion found in student's writing on the Finiteness as can be seen in this sentence: *There we <u>recognized or know</u> the history of a heroine that is cut nyak dhien.* It is not clear what tense the writer was attempted to use, as the first verb indicates past tense and the second indicates present tense. However, because in analyzing a text we need to place ourselves in the writer's position, it may occur that the writer's intention was actually to use past tense, but she misplaced the second verb and regard the verb as a form of past tense. Otherwise, it can be said that this clause has double Finite.

b) Experiential metafunction: There are several types of process in experiential metafunction, including material process, mental process, behavioral process, verbal process, existential process, and relational process [7]. The kind of process usually used in recount text is the material process, as it is realized by the use of action verbs. However, in the student's recount text, not all processes found were material process. From 13 clauses, 7 of them used relational process, while only 4 of them used material process, and the remaining indicated the mental process. Relational process was mostly found because the writer tried to explain the relation between participants in the clause.

Not only the process that we need to analyze in term of transitivity, but also participants of each clause. There are several types of participants involved in this text as there are three types of process identified from this text. Below are the examples of types of participants from each type of process found in the text:

TABLE I. EXAMPLES OF TYPES OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH TYPE OF PROCESS FOUND IN THE TEXT

	When	I	was	In six grade elementary school
Experiential		Carrier	Process: Relational	Attribute
	There	we	recognized or know	The history of a heroine that is Cut Nyak Dhien
Experiential		Partici-pant	Process: mental	Phenome-non
	I	Went	To Sumedang	With my friend and teachers at school
Experiential	Participant	Process: material	Goal	

c) Textual metafunction

In analyzing the textual meanings, we need a closer look at Thematization of a clause, which comprises of Theme and Rheme [7]. There are several types of Theme: topical, textual, and interpersonal theme. Most of the clauses in the student's recount text were identified as topical Theme, but textual Theme was also found in a clause, and there is also a clause with multiple Theme. The examples of theme found in the text are as follows:

TABLE II. THE EXAMPLES OF THEME FOUND IN THE TEXT

	The place we first visited	Was	The grave Cut Nyak Dhien.
Textual	Theme: unmarked topical	Rheme	Textual
	And	We	See the weapons of the heroes in the museum
Textual	Textual theme	Topical theme	Rheme
	Theme: unmarked		

The last clause shows the multiple Theme identified from the text. Although the writer frequently used unmarked topical Theme, it can be seen from the text that other types of Theme can also be recognized. Topical Theme mostly found in this text as topical Theme act as subject of a clause, and most of the Theme in this text act as subject. Meanwhile the textual Theme comprises of conjunctions and conjunctive which relates the clause to the context [7].

Therefore, it can be seen from the analysis of Thematization that the student has no significant problems in arranging the theme of their clauses. Although the clauses are still not well arranged, she managed to keep the theme of the clauses related one another.

B. Applying MALL to Help Students Engage and Solve the Problems in Writing Recount Text

MALL emerges from the current situation of technology development, in which the mobile technologies has been evolved so much during this 21st century [3]. Although MALL is considered as the development of CALL, there is a difference between both approaches as MALL is using portable and personal devices which enables the users to be involved in a new way of learning, and it emphasizes on the continuous access within a various context of use [12].

However, like any other approaches, there are also some challenges needed to be considered before applying MALL in classroom context. One of them is a distraction resulting from the constant access of the mobile devices [2]. Besides, the mobility of mobile devices used in this approach appears to be more informal to be used as learning tools. Although the use of mobile devices is considered flexible and can bring the learning activity beyond the classroom context, there is a need to consider the best way to take this approach from informal to formal context of learning [2]. Another consideration is the appropriate method that can go well with the use of mobile devices and fit with the local situation of the learners which may vary depending on their backgrounds.

Therefore, grounded from the analysis of the data above, the use of MALL is proposed in this study in order to engage the students in learning activity as well as to help them resolve the problems they usually face during learning and writing recount text. However, there are some limitations in this study in which the device used as the learning tool here is the mobile phone which is the device that is owned by all of the subjects participated in this study.

In order to make this approach works well, a good collaboration between students and teachers are needed. As the purpose of this approach is to engage the students in learning activity, learners are required to learn independently during the process. Teachers thus act as a facilitator in guiding their learning and help them when they encounter some difficulties during the learning process. To give a clear image on the implementation of this approach, the steps of MALL implementation is presented below:
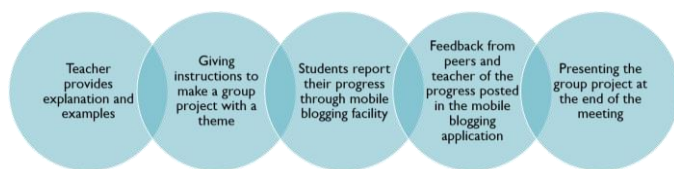

Fig. 1. The steps of MALL implementation.

This approach is proposed with some considerations, and expected to give some implications including increasing the students "noticing" ability on the mistakes or errors they have made in writing recount text, providing spontaneous and continuous interaction of students and teacher through the use of mobile blogging application so it can help them to share their progress and get immediate feedback from their work, and fostering learner autonomy as they are given the freedom to choose the content for their project.

IV. CONCLUSION

In order to teach writing effectively, teacher needs to have sufficient knowledge about the genre he or she is going to teach. Moreover, understanding the problems encountered by the students on the said genre is also important so that teacher can employ the appropriate method to teach the students. With the intention of understanding the problems, analyzing the text is crucial so that teacher can distinguish the problem and decide the appropriate solution to solve it. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) can assist the teacher in analyzing the students' writing as it offers the framework to analyze how the language choices comprise the meanings in a text [5].

Based on the analysis conducted in this study, it was found the writing problems mainly dealing with grammatical error, mechanical error, and also basic confusion in generic structure of the text. These problems occurred because of several factors, and one of them is their lack of understanding about the genre of the text. Therefore, MALL is proposed in this study as an alternative approach which can be used to improve the students' ability in writing recount text. However, before implementing this approach, teacher needs to consider several things on behalf of the learners. This approach may encounter many challenges especially from the learners' side. Therefore, teacher need to find the appropriate learning method that can suit better for the learners by using this approach.

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