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From Biography to Short Story: Model Transformation as A Learning Strategy of Creative Writing

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Abstract
This article offers a learning model to write a short story that is by using a model-transformation strategy. The aim of this article was to ease the process of writing a short story by university students. Model transformation strategy is a strategy to transform model of texts from nonfiction (biography) to fiction (short story). The idea was originated from Lucke (1998: 5) who argues that a piece of fiction is actually constructed from facts. A biography is a historical composition which consists of experiences of a certain individual or a group. It tells about reality. A biography can provide ideas to be written into a short story.

The strategy of model transformation consists of four phases: (1) introduction phase: reading a biography, (2) presentation phase; identifying the elements of the biography, (3) classification phase; transforming the biography structure into the structure of a short story, (4) writing phase; generating a story. The description of each phase has attracted the students’ attention to know more about the basic concepts of texts, especially to find meanings in a biography. The description has also ensured that the students understand the basic concepts of texts. The presentation stage has provided skills to determine the elements of a biography. At the classification phase, the students are expected to be able to generate an understanding on a transformation of a biography into a short story of which elements are (a) characters creation, (b) conflict presentation, (c) plot arrangement, (d) conflicts and events settlement, and (e) resolution. Through this stage, the students practice the skills to transform ideas and to write a story.

Keywords: biography, short story, model transformation, and creative writing

Introduction
One of basic competences in a literature writing subject is to be able to produce a short story. This subject aims to develop the students’ creativity and imagination. Creating a piece of writing can foster the power of initiation to keep creating, exploring, and generating new ideas.

Referring to the process, writing is an activity which can be perceived as (1) a skill, (2) a thinking process (reasoning), (3) an act of transforming,(4) a communication, and (5) a process. Similar to other language skills, writing needs to be practiced recursively.

To write a short story creatively, a writer needs to pay deep attention to expressing ideas in which the elements of the story are found. Reasoning skill which refers to a systematic thinking process to picture ideas is very important in this process. A creative writing activity according to Widijanto (2014:18) is a creative process of writing which cannot be separated from reading. During the process of
writing, a writer is required to seek for ideas from many references and read them. Ideas, thus, can be generated through reading a lot.

One form of creative writings is a short story. Ramet (2007) describes the characteristics of a short story as follows: a) it focuses on one event, b) it only has one plot; c) it has one setting, d) it has limited numbers of characters, and e) it is restricted to a certain context of time. Creative writing is very positive and beneficial in life.

Before writing a story, a writer needs to read someone’s biography. She has to analyze the biography and connect events in one’s life. Through this process, she will find a link, a description of actions and mysteries happening in someone’s life as well as an explanation of his/her behaviors. A biography often talks about the life of legendary or even ordinary people. A biography of the ordinary people, however, will portray one or more certain places or time. It mostly involves a historical figure, but it is not impossible that the figures are still alive. Many biographies are chronologically ordered. The time periods are categorized based on particular themes.

The process of transforming a biography into a short story utilizes one of creative writing strategies; one of which is the model-transformation strategy. The model transformation strategy is a strategy to transform one story mode to another (Damono, 2011:1), such as transforming a literary work into a stage performance and transforming a discourse into a piece of literature. The genres are different and so are the features. Language as the medium is open to the writer’s imagination. Therefore, mental process exists during this process. Language used also provides a broader space for readers to interpret and imagine everything produced in the text.

Based on the observation, it was proved that the students still had poor creative writing competence. This happened because they had little interest and willingness in writing. Their ability and creativity were not well developed since they were less confident and fed up with reading a number of references. As a result, writing had become a burden for them. In accordance with the previous explanation, a learning strategy needs to be set in order to integrate reading and writing, especially in writing a short story. By using this strategy, the students are expected to have an understanding and a skill to write.
Discussion

(1) Introduction phase: reading a biography,

**BIOGRAPHY OF TIRTO UTOMO**

Indonesian people must recognize Aqua. This brand is very popular among people in the whole area, from urban to rural. Aqua became a pioneer of bottled water in Indonesia. The founder, Tirt'o Utomo, was the first person who came up with the idea. Tirt'o Utomo or Kwa Sien Biauw was born in Wonosobo, Central Java, on March 8, 1930. Since there was no junior high school in Wonosobo, Tirt'o Utomo then had to go to school in Magelang which was about 60 kilometers away from his city. He used to go to school by bicycle.

**Biography of Tirt'o Utomo, The Aqua Founder**

While he was studying in University of Gajah Mada in Surabaya for two years, he also spent his time being a journalist for JawaPos to collect news from the court. Since he could not finish his study there, he had to transfer to Faculty of Law in University of Indonesia. In Jakarta, he was also working as a Chief Editor in Sin Po Daily Newspaper and PantjaWarna Magazine. In 1954, Lisa graduated from a senior high school in Malang. Lisa went to the same university as Tito, but different faculty; she went to the Faculty of Letters. Lisa was working in British American Tobacco (BAT Indonesia) at that time. In March 1955, Lisa failed her exam and decided to stop going to college. When Lisa taught English in Regina Pacis elementary school, Batu Cepe and worked as a freelance translation and typist, she was proposed by Tirt'o and they got married on December 21, 1957 in Malang.

Unfortunately, in 1959, Tirt'o was retired from his job as the chief editor. Their family, thus, had to survive from a financial crisis. Since then, Tirt'o had a strong determination to finish his study soon. While Tirt'o was studying, Lisa played a role as the breadwinner. She became a teacher and started a catering business, with a help from her husband. In October 1960, Tirt'o Utomo got his Bachelor in Law. He then sent an application to Permina (the National Oil Company) which later changed its name into Pertamina. He got hired and he was placed in Pangkalan Brandan. There, they had to go to the river to take a bath. His perseverance led him to success. He was trusted as the main person in oil marketing.

Tirt'o Utomo needed to spend a half of his life abroad due to his position as the Deputy Head Legal and Foreign Marketing. At the age of 48, he decided to retire from his job and manage his own companies that are AQUA, PT. Baja Putih, and the Oasis restaurant.

The idea of AQUA bottled mineral water

Why was it named AQUA? A Singaporean who designed its logo proposed the name. Eulindra Lim, the designer, said that AQUA was easy to pronounce and to remember as it meant “water”. AQUA was actually an old term. The proof is that Tirt'o often used the word ‘A Kwa’ which sounded similar to AQUA when he became the Chief Editor in Sin Po and Pantja Warna magazine in the late 1950s. A Kwa was taken from his original name Kwa Sien Biauw. He started using Tirt'o Utomo in 1960s which incidentally meant ‘primary water’.

"It was very difficult to convince people to consume mineral water. People would
say “Why should consume raw water?” We often heard such a mock.” said Willy Sidharta. At that time, soft carbonate drinks such as Cola Cola, Sprite, 7 Up, and Green Spot were so popular that the idea of selling tasteless and colorless mineral water was thought to be insane.

The AQUA was not sold very well until 1978. It was not surprising that TirtoUtomo almost closed his company because the target had not been reached until the set time. He could not stand the deficit, but there was always a rainbow after the rain. TirtoUtomo and his management staff finally increased the price by three times although it was contradictory to his present company condition. He had been prepared for the turnover risk but the market revealed the other thing. The sales soared. Perhaps, people thought that price determined quality: high price means high quality. AQUA finally served segments which are interested to subscribe. Mountain Spring Water

In 1982, AQUA changed its source of water from the boreholes into mountain self-flowing springs because it was thought that the water contained natural mineral composition which was rich of nutrition such as calcium, magnesium, potassium, iron, and sodium. One of his regular costumers was Hyundai, the contractor of Jagorawi highway. The habit of drinking mineral water was contagious, from the engineers from South Korea to their indigenous workers. Through such kind of effect, bottled mineral water was accepted in society at last. Tirto was a modest business. He was kind, friendly, and very intelligent. Trio passed away in 1994. However, his achievement as the AQUA founder and a mineral water producer with the biggest single brand in the world will never be forgotten.

Source: http://www.biografiku.com/2013/03/biografi-tirto-utomo-pendiri-aqua.html

After reading the biography above, the next step is to continue writing a short story following the guidelines described as follows.

(2) Presentation phase; the elements of a biography; 5W + 1 H
- What : Aqua
- Who : Tirto Utomo
- When : 1982 to 1994
- Why : ventures producing mineral water
- Where : Indonesia
- How : The AQUA was not sold very well until 1978. It was not surprising that TirtoUtomo almost closed his company because the target had not been reached until the set time. He could not stand the deficit, but there was always a rainbow after the rain. Through such kind of effect, bottled mineral water was accepted in society at last

(3) Clarification phase: transforming the biography structure into a short story structure,
(a) characters creation,
(b) plot arrangement,
(c) conflict and events settlement,
(d) resolution
(4) Writing phase; generating a story
Based on the reading and classification of the biography above, the process of telling the story is ready to begin, using the transformation guidelines card. This step requires imagination.
The imagination process is a cognitive process which refers to mental activities which have nothing to do with the five senses. Imagination involves a synthetic construction which combines aspects of memories and experiences from the past and builds a mental picture of them in the present, or even an anticipation to those realities in the future. In general, imagination is regarded as one of “higher mental functions” which is often associated with fantasy, wishful thoughts, or new original solutions to problems.
The imagination is stimulated by these following questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who am I?</td>
<td>Tirto Utomo or Kwa Sien Biauw was born in Wonosobo, Central Java, on March 8, 1930. Since there was no junior high school in Wonosobo, Tirto Utomo then had to go to school in Magelang which was about 60 kilometers away from his city. He used to go to school by bicycle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When was I born?</td>
<td>Wonosobo, Central Java, on March 8, 1930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is my family background?</td>
<td>My family is encouragement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is my hometown background?</td>
<td>My residence very simple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is my educational background?</td>
<td>While he was studying in University of Gajah Mada in Surabaya for two years, he also spent his time being a journalist for JawaPos to collect news from the court. Since he could not finish his study there, he had to transfer to Faculty of Law in University of Indonesia. In Jakarta, he was also working as a Chief Editor in Sin Po Daily Newspaper and PantjaWarna Magazine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What good or bad experiences have I gone through in my life?</td>
<td>Unfortunately, in 1959, Tirto was retired from his job as the chief editor. Their family, thus, had to survive from a financial crisis. Since then, Tirto had a strong determination to finish his study soon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did I feel at that time?</td>
<td>Work with passion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was the advantages of working?</td>
<td>Provide benefits to the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who helped me to do my job?</td>
<td>People who love me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What don’t I like about</td>
<td>Fast feel hopeless</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
my job and/or about my life?

- Do I ever give something precious for my family and beloved ones? Make them happy
- How did they respond to it? They are happy and feel the results of my struggle
- What is the biggest conflict I have ever faced? Ups and downs in business
- How could I deal with that conflict? Always get up without feeling hopeless
- Do I feel content with anything that has happened? I was happy with the results of my work
- How can I define success? Success is a blessing. True success is to live with gratitude for all the grace of God

writing stories

Persistence is the ability to survive in the midst of pressure and difficulties. This sentence motivated me to not stop at the first step. Indeed, the farther we walked, the more obstacles ahead. I was the founder of aqua mineral water business. My name is Tirto Utomo or Kwa Sien Biauw. I was born in Wonosobo, Central Java, on March 8, 1930. Since there was no junior high school in Wonosobo, I have gone to school in Magelang which was about 60 kilometers away from his city. I have used to go to school by bicycle.

Unfortunately, in 1959, I have retired from his job as the chief editor. My family, thus, had to survive from a financial crisis. Since then, I have a strong determination to finish my study. I feel work with passion. I hope, my work make provide benefits to the community. People who love me, helped me to do my job. In my live, I don’t like in my life that fast feel hopeless. I ever give something precious for my family and beloved ones for make them happy. They are happy and feel the results of my struggle. The biggest conflict I have ever faced is ups and downs in business. I deal with that conflict is always get up without feeling hopeless. I feel content with anything that has happened with the results of my work. Success is a blessing. True success is to live with gratitude for all the grace of God.

Conclusions

The strategy of model transformation consists of four phases: (1) introduction phase: reading a biography, (2) presentation phase: identifying the elements of the biography, (3) classification phase: transforming the biography structure into the structure of a short story, (4) writing phase; generating a story.
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tirto-utomo-pendiri-aqua.html