Written Retelling Techniques as a Strategy to Enhance Students' Learning Readiness in a Language Theory Class

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Abstract

This study aims to propose a solution to enhance students' readiness in understanding Pragmatics material. The method is implemented using a written retelling technique for the students attending the Pragmatics class, which involves 30 students. This technique has previously been shown to improve learners' comprehension and engagement in language learning contexts (Rudiawan & Jupri, 2020). The data consists of the texts written by students after they have read and understood Pragmatics. The results show that the four stages of the written retelling technique can improve students' readiness in studying Pragmatics. It is suggested that this technique be applied more widely in other language theory courses to help students strengthen comprehension and motivation before classroom instruction.

Keywords: *written retelling technique, pragmatics, readiness, language theory*

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Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menawarkan solusi dalam meningkatkan kesiapan mahasiswa dalam memahami materi Pragmatik. Metode yang digunakan adalah teknik *written retelling* (penulisan ulang) yang diterapkan kepada mahasiswa yang mengikuti mata kuliah Pragmatik, dengan jumlah peserta sebanyak 30 orang. Teknik ini sebelumnya telah terbukti dapat meningkatkan pemahaman dan keterlibatan peserta didik dalam konteks pembelajaran bahasa (Rudiawan & Jupri, 2020). Data penelitian berupa teks yang ditulis oleh mahasiswa setelah mereka membaca dan memahami materi Pragmatik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa keempat tahapan dalam teknik *written retelling* dapat meningkatkan kesiapan mahasiswa dalam mempelajari Pragmatik. Disarankan agar teknik ini diterapkan lebih luas pada mata kuliah teori bahasa lainnya untuk membantu mahasiswa memperkuat pemahaman dan motivasi sebelum pelaksanaan pembelajaran di kelas.

Kata kunci: *written retelling technique, pragmatik, kesiapan, teori bahasa*

Introduction

Learning is essentially an interaction between a stimulus and a response, aimed at producing relatively permanent behavioral changes through experience or practice. Such changes serve as indicators that a learning process has taken place.

The learning process involves two key elements: input, in the form of stimuli provided by the instructor, and output, in the form of learners' responses. Both must be observable and measurable.

In higher education, however, students often encounter challenges in comprehending course materials, which requires instructors to apply effective teaching methods and techniques to facilitate understanding and support the achievement of educational goals. In practice, only a small proportion of students can fully understand the material presented by the lecturer, while many others experience considerable difficulties (Ariastuti et al., 2021).

This issue is also evident in the Language Theory course, particularly in the Pragmatics class within the English Literature Study Program at Universitas Jenderal Soedirman. Lecturers often find it challenging to help students grasp the content, especially when English is used as the medium of instruction. One major factor contributing to this difficulty is students' lack of readiness before attending class, which is often linked to their reluctance to read the assigned references in advance.

In response to the condition, this research was conducted to determine a lecture technique that can help students prepare themselves before the learning process begins. This study employs a written retelling technique to enhance students' learning readiness in the Pragmatics class. The problem in this study is how to apply the written retelling technique to increase student learning readiness in the Pragmatics class.

The objectives are (1) to examine the implementation of the written retelling technique in enhancing learning readiness in the Pragmatics class, and (2) to identify the outcomes of the implementation. Theoretically, this research contributes a learning

technique to the language theory class, which is associated with an increase in student learning readiness. Practically, the results offer direct benefits to students by fostering active preparation before class, and it is expected that the techniques can also be applied in other theory-based subjects.

In this regard, learning is viewed as a two-way communication process, with the lecturer acting as a facilitator and educator and the students as active learners.

At the outset of instruction, lecturers need to identify students' basic competencies, including prior knowledge, motivation, academic background, and socio-economic context. One crucial indicator of successful instruction is the lecturer's readiness to understand these learner characteristics, which in turn forms the basis for the effective delivery of course material.

Dimyati and Mudjiono (1999) describe learning as a teacher's activity within a programmatic framework of instructional design, aiming to encourage students to learn actively. The focus is on providing learning resources. Furthermore, they explained two characteristics of learning: first, the learning process involves the student's maximum mental engagement, not only requiring students to listen and take notes, but also involving students in the thinking process through various activities. The second factor is learning to build a dialogical atmosphere and a continuous question-and-answer process that is directed at improving students' abilities. The estuary of these factors is the ability to think, which enables students to acquire knowledge that they have constructed themselves.

Mulyasa (2003) highlights five learning models, namely:
(1)   Contextual Teaching Learning (CTL)

This model is a learning concept that emphasizes the relationship between learning materials and the real world, enabling learners to connect and apply learning outcome competencies in their daily lives. In this model, the teacher's task is to provide learners with convenient learning opportunities by offering a variety of adequate learning facilities and resources, as well as organizing a learning environment and strategies that facilitate learning.

Quoting Zahorik's ideas (as cited in Mulyasa, 2003), five elements must be considered in contextual learning, namely: (a) learning instruction is given based on the prior knowledge possessed by students; (b) learning starts from the whole (global) to specific parts (from general to particular); (c) learning must be emphasized on understanding, which involves constructing preliminary concepts, sharing ideas to obtain input and responses from others, and revising and developing those concepts; (d) learning should emphasize the direct practice of the material learned; and (e) reflection needs to be incorporated into the learning strategies as an evaluation to develop acquired knowledge further.

(2)   Role Playing

Role-playing is one of the learning models designed to address problems related to human relationships (interpersonal relationships), particularly those affecting the lives of learners. The learning experience obtained from this method includes the ability to be cooperative, communicative, and interpret an event. This model invites learners to explore human relationships by demonstrating and discussing them, allowing them to work together to examine feelings, attitudes, values, and various problem-solving strategies.

Shaftel and Shaftel (in Mulyasa, 2003) propose the stages of role-playing learning, which include warming the atmosphere and motivating students, choosing roles, arranging role stages, and preparing observers. Next is the acting stage, followed by the discussion and evaluation phase I, re-acting, discussion and evaluation phase II, and sharing experiences and decision-making.

(3)   Participative Teaching and Learning

This model actively involves learners in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning. By adapting Knowles' (Mulyasa, 2003) thinking, the indicators of participatory learning are the existence of emotional and mental involvement among students, as well as the willingness of students to contribute to achieving the goals. In learning activities, some things benefit students.

The development of participatory learning is carried out through several procedures, namely creating an atmosphere that encourages students to be ready to

learn, helping students organize groups to facilitate learning, and assisting students in diagnosing and identifying their learning needs. The following procedure is designed to help students develop learning objectives, design learning experience patterns, carry out learning activities, and evaluate their own learning processes and outcomes.

(4)   Mastery Learning

This model assumes that, under the right conditions, all students can learn effectively and achieve maximum results from the material studied. Therefore, learning is carried out systematically, as reflected in the learning strategies implemented, particularly in organizing learning objectives and materials, conducting evaluations, and providing guidance to students who fail to achieve the set goals. Learning objectives are specifically organized to facilitate the evaluation of learning outcomes. In addition, the teaching materials need to be divided into specific learning units, and before the learning process advances to the next stage, students should be able to master the complete materials for all purposes related to each learning unit.

Evaluations conducted after students complete a specific learning activity serve as the basis for obtaining feedback. The primary purpose of the evaluation is to gather information about the learners' achievement of goals and mastery of the material. The results of the evaluation are used to determine where and in what cases students need guidance in achieving their goals, so that all students can achieve their objectives and master the learning materials to the fullest extent (complete learning).

Bloom stated that the complete learning strategy includes three parts, namely: (1) identifying pre-conditions; (2) developing operational procedures and learning outcomes; and (3) implementation in classical learning by providing "spices" to adjust to individual abilities, which includes: (1) corrective technique (a kind of remedial), which is to provide teaching to goals that students fail to achieve, with different procedures and methods than before; and (2) providing additional time to students in need (before mastering the material completely).

The complete learning system achieves optimal results when supported by a variety of media, including both hardware and software, as well as the use of computers (such as the internet), ensuring the learning process runs effectively.

(5)   Modular Instruction

Modules are a structured learning process for specific subject units, arranged systematically and operationally, designed for use by students, and accompanied by guidelines for their use by teachers.

In general, learning the module system involves several components, including student activity sheets, worksheets, worksheet keys, question sheets, answer sheets, and answer keys. These components are packaged in a module format, namely: 1) Introduction (general description of the material, knowledge, skills and attitudes to be achieved after studying, including the initial abilities that must be possessed to study the module); 2) Learning Objectives (specific learning objectives that students must achieve after studying the modules; 3) Initial Test (to establish the student's position and know his or her initial abilities, to determine where he should start learning, and whether or not it is necessary to study the module); 4) Learning Experience (details of the material for each specific learning objective, followed by formative assessment in return for students about the learning objectives they have achieved; and 5) Learning Resources (learning resources that can be explored and used by students); and 6) Final Test (the instruments used in the final test are the same as those used in the initial test, only more focused on the terminal objectives of each module).

The primary role of teachers in this model is to organize and manage the learning process, including preparing conducive learning environments, assisting students who have difficulties understanding the content of modules or implementing assignments, and conducting research on each student.

(6)   Inquiry Learning

Inquiry learning is a learning activity that involves the maximum ability of students to search and investigate something (objects, people, or events) systematically, critically, logically, and analytically so that they can formulate their findings independently with complete confidence.

The inquiry process is carried out through the following stages: 1. Formulating the problem (building awareness of the problem, seeing the importance of the problem,

and formulating the problem); 2. Developing hypotheses (testing and classifying data that can be obtained, seeing and formulating existing relationships logically); 3. Testing tentative answers (identifying required events, collecting data, and evaluating data; by compiling data consisting of translating, interpreting data, and characterizing data; by analyzing data that includes seeing relationships, noting similarities and differences, and identifying trends, sequences, and regularity); 4. Conclude (find patterns and meanings of relationships and formulate conclusions); and 5. Apply conclusions and generalizations.

In this model, teachers have roles as counselors, consultants, critical friends, and facilitators. He must be able to guide and reflect on the group's experience, as well as facilitate group work.

Research on written retelling techniques, so far, has been more focused, especially on language skills, namely the ability to read comprehension, as the results of research by Sylvia and Utami Widiati (2017) on the impact of written retelling techniques on reading comprehension (ability to comprehend reading). The research was conducted on students with diverse learning styles (introverted vs. extroverted), and the results indicated that the written retelling method was effective regardless of the students' learning styles.

Unlike the research mentioned above, the application of the written retelling technique in this study is directed at one of the language theories, namely Pragmatics, and students who take this class have already passed several language skills courses (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

Methods

This research employed a qualitative descriptive research design, which explains the application of written retelling techniques in increasing learning readiness in language theory classes, specifically Pragmatics classes (Rudiawan & Jupri, 2020) . The respondents in this study are 30 students from the S1 English Literature Study Program who are enrolled in a course on one of the language theories, specifically Pragmatics.

At the beginning of the lecture, students are asked to read about the topic that will be taught that day for 15 minutes. After that, within 5 minutes, students are asked to

explain and write down the topics that have been read. At the end of the lecture, the lecturer reviews the results of the students' written explanations by commenting on both the best writing and the writing that still needs improvement. Discussions were also held to share ideas and understanding from the sub-chapters they read. This technique will be implemented over the subsequent four meetings.

The data for this research are the results of student writings that explain the topics presented by lecturers in each lecture. This study uses a total sampling technique, which means that all student writings (which contain a re-explanation of related topics) are used as data. Once collected, the data is analyzed to see if there is an increase in students' learning readiness.

Results and Discussion

A. The implementation

Several problems arise during the learning process, one of which is the students' lack of readiness to learn the material before attending lectures. They tend not to read lecture materials or other references related to the lecture topics they are participating in first. Even some new students look for lecture materials shortly before the lecture starts.

The absence of such learning readiness certainly hinders the learning process. Students only attend classes without basic knowledge of the material to be delivered. This condition can worsen when the class is a language theory class, where most reference books are in English and are also delivered in English. Innovative teaching strategies, such as flipped and reflective learning, have been shown to enhance students' pragmatic competence and engagement (Nugroho & Fitriati, 2021).

When students attend lectures without prior preparation, they encounter obstacles in any learning methods and techniques applied, making it difficult for them to grasp the material presented. This condition prompts researchers to seek a way or a learning technique that can motivate students to first read references before attending lectures.

The Written Retelling Technique is one of the instructional strategies employed to address classroom challenges. This technique involves explaining concepts through written explanations of the materials that have been read. So, students write down things they understand from the references they have read. For 15 minutes, before the lecturer

delivers the material, students are asked to read the theory of Pragmatics relevant to the day's lecture topic. Then, within 5 minutes, they are asked to explain the material they have read in written form.

The stages of implementation are:

1. Preparation – The lecturers prepare the materials and topics, including reference books used in lectures. The lecturer also prepares an HVS paper that students will use to write an explanation of the material they have read. Additionally, they prepare questions related to students' motivation and learning readiness. Student answers are used as an initial assessment to gauge the condition of students' learning readiness at the beginning of lectures.

2. Implementation:
   a. The lecturer greets the students when starting the lecture, while asking the students how they are doing and how they are feeling to get an overview of the physical and psychological condition of the students when attending the lecture that day.
   b. The lecturer conducted brainstorming in the form of self-introduction and introduction to the lecture material before entering the lecture topic that day.
   c. The lecturer asks students to read Chapter 1 on Pragmatics in general, for 15 minutes.
   d. After the students finished reading, the lecturer distributed the HVS paper and asked the students to explain (in written form) the things they had read, namely about Pragmatics, within 5 minutes. From the results of the written explanation, students can gain a deeper understanding of the material and assess their readiness to learn before attending lectures. Next, students were given questions about their learning readiness and how they felt that day.

3. Analysis – After the student finishes carrying out the Written Retelling Technique, the lecturer starts the lecture. The lecturer explained the material according to the topic and then asked the students to discuss it. When students

are talking about, the lecturer quickly reads (scanning) the student's writing and analyzes the content. Lecturers sort the results of student writings from those that contain detailed explanations to those that contain explanations that are lacking. Furthermore, the lecturer continued the lecture activities by reviewing the results of student discussions.

4. Evaluation

At this stage, the lecturer explains the best writing, accompanied by reasons based on the completeness of the students' explanations of the topic covered that day. Lecturers also give appreciation to students whose writing is the best, usually by asking other friends to give their applause. Although simple, such appreciation can motivate students to produce better writing at the next opportunity, and it can also inspire their friends.

B. The result

The Written Retelling Technique was applied to four lectures, specifically in the second, third, fourth, and fifth meetings. At the first meeting, the application of the Written Retelling Technique had not been carried out because the lecture activities were still in the form of introductions, learning contracts between lecturers and students, explanations of the lecture outline and learning event units (SAP), and the introduction of general knowledge about Pragmatics. The time range for the implementation of the Written Retelling Technique is:

Table 1. Schedule of Implementation

No	Description	Date
1	Written Retelling Technique I	March 12, 2018
2	Written Retelling Technique II	March 19, 2018
3	Written Retelling Technique III	March 26, 2018
4	Written Retelling Technique IV	02 April 2018

After applying the Written Retelling Technique in the Pragmatics class, the researcher analyzed the writing results of all students to identify patterns in students' learning readiness and understanding of the lecture material. The analysis was carried out based on the completeness of the students' explanations. The more students can explain concepts correctly, accompanied by relevant examples, the more it demonstrates that they have the readiness to learn, making it easier for them to understand the material.

1.   Written Retelling Technique I

The Written Retelling Technique was applied in the second lecture meeting. Students are unsure if there will be a 15-minute reading activity before the lecture begins. When asked to complete reading activities, 7 out of 30 students did not have the lecture teaching materials, despite the materials having been provided since the first lecture.

In carrying out reading activities, only a few students look serious about reading. Some of the other students did not seem to be serious about reading; they were seen just skimming through the material, flipping through pages, playing with stationery, and even chatting while whispering. After 15 minutes, they were asked to rewrite the material they had read. The results of the analysis of the explanation given by students on the implementation of the first written retelling technique are:

Table 2. The implementation of Written Retelling Technique I

No	Description	Number of Students
1	Provided a detailed definition of Pragmatics with examples, including comparison with Semantics and additional explanations	2
2	Provided a detailed definition of Pragmatics with examples	8
3	Provided a detailed definition of Pragmatics	13
4	Gave incorrect definitions of Pragmatics	3
5	Did not write anything	4

After completing their written retellings, the students were asked to respond to several questions designed to explore their learning readiness and motivation. These questions addressed whether they had read the assigned Pragmatics book from the previous week, the kinds of preparations they made for the day's class, the preferred techniques they wished to use in studying Pragmatics theory, the challenges and difficulties they experienced in understanding the subject, and finally, their feelings while attending the Pragmatics class.

The responses revealed that only two students reported having read the Pragmatics text assigned the previous week, and only two indicated that they had made any preparation for class. In terms of preferred learning methods, most students favored lectures, group presentations, and discussions. The main difficulties reported were understanding the English-language references and comprehending the explanations provided in class. Finally, many students admitted feeling unmotivated, lacking concentration, and reluctant to read or prepare before attending the lecture.

2.   The implementation of Written Retelling Technique II

Table 3. Written Retelling Technique II

No	Description	Number of Students
1	Rewriting the definition of deixis in detail, provide a detailed definition of each type of deixis, and give examples.	6
2	Rewriting the definition of deixis in detail, write the types of deixis correctly, and give examples.	7
3	Rewriting the definition of deixis accurately and correctly identifying the types of deixis.	8
4	Rewriting the definition of deixis correctly	7
5	Mistakenly rewriting the definition of deixis	2
6	Did not write anything	0

The second implementation showed noticeable improvement. Six students provided detailed definitions of deixis, including its types and examples. Seven others wrote precise explanations of deixis and its types with examples, while eight explained correctly without examples. Only two students gave inaccurate answers, and none left the task blank. This indicates a positive shift in readiness and engagement compared to the first session.

3.   The implementation of Written Retelling Technique III

Table 4. Written Retelling Technique III

No	Description	Number of Students
1	Rewrite the definitions of *reference* and *inference* in detail, write the types of *references* and *inference* correctly, provide a detailed definition of each type *of* reference and inference, and give examples.	17
2	Rewrite the definitions of *reference* and *inference* in detail, only write the types of *references* and *inference* correctly, and give examples.	6
3	Rewrite the definitions of reference and inference correctly, specifying only the types of references and inference without providing examples.	4
4	Erroneously rewriting the definitions of reference and inference	0
5	Did not write anything	0
6	Absent	3

The result of Table 4 shows that students' preparedness improved significantly. Seventeen students wrote comprehensive definitions of reference and inference, correctly listing the types with detailed examples. Six others explained both terms with partial detail, while four wrote correct but less complete explanations. No students gave

incorrect answers, although three were absent. These results highlight a growing motivation to read and understand the material before class.

4.   The implementation of Written Retelling Technique IV

Table 5. Written Retelling Technique III

No	Description	Number of Students
1	Rewrite the definitions of presupposition and *entailment* correctly and in detail, write the types and definitions of presupposition and entailment correctly, and give examples.	19
2	Rewrite the definitions of presupposition and entailment correctly, just write each type of presupposition and entailment correctly, and give examples.	5
3	Rewrite the definitions of presupposition and *entailment* correctly, specifying only the types of presupposition and entailment without providing examples.	4
4	Wrongly rewriting the definitions of presupposition and entailment.	0
5	Do not write anything.	0
6	Absent	2

The above results indicate an increase in student learning readiness following the completion of the Pragmatics class. This increase can be observed in the students' writing, which incorporates the material they have read, and is evident in the way students explain the material they have previously covered.

On the first day of implementing the Written Retelling Technique, most students only wrote down the definition of the topic for the day. Very few students can thoroughly explain the material they have read. Most students struggle to re-explain the

points they have read because they do not prepare before lectures, making it difficult for them to understand the material they have read for the first time.

Furthermore, there was a significant change in the learning pattern of students during the implementation of the next Written Retelling Technique. With the application of this technique, students become motivated to read the material before attending lectures. Even in the next implementation, when students do not understand the things they read, they will look for other references, and they even read references in Indonesian to make it easier for them to understand the lecture material. They become motivated to provide the most comprehensive explanation when asked to rewrite the material they have read. Some students are even able to rewrite it in detail, completed with pictures and charts that illustrate their thought processes (Anggeraini et al., 2020).

The students' feedback indicates that this approach helps enhance their understanding of the following learning process, and they can relate each other's perception of a theory they have read before to the material explained by the lecturer. They also reported being more prepared to participate in lectures, ensuring they have a comprehensive understanding of the material presented.

Conclusion & Recommendation

The application of the Written Retelling Technique can significantly encourage students to develop the motivation to explain the material more effectively in written presentations. The result of applying this technique is that students gain a comprehensive understanding of the theory. Consequently, when they are faced with diverse linguistic cases, students can explain them with greater accuracy and confidence (Ariani et al., 2021).

Based on the findings, it is suggested that lecturers implement the Written Retelling Technique more consistently in other language theory courses to help students prepare before class and strengthen their comprehension skills. Future studies could also examine the effectiveness of this technique in different contexts or compare it with other active learning methods, such as reflective writing or peer explanation activities, to enrich insights into students' learning readiness and engagement.

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Conflict of Interest

Potential conflict of interest, if any, should be reported here during data collection.

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