

THE USE OF PROJECT-BASED TASK TO IMPROVE ELEVENTH GRADERS' ABILITY IN WRITING HORTATORY EXPOSITION TEXT AT SMAN 1 NGADIROJO PACITAN

Dhiah Ayu Estiningrum and Kusumarasdyati

S1- English Education, Language and Art Faculty, Surabaya State University

Abstract

Writing is one of English skills that should be mastered by the students. It belongs to productive skill in which ones are expected to communicate their ideas with others in a written form. In a writing composition, there are some components need to be considered. This case makes writing be more complicated than other English skills. It is suggested to create meaningful activities in order to engage students in the learning process. As Tessema (2005) stated on his journal, Project-Based Task can facilitate the students' need and interest, and also booster the students' motivation.

This study aimed to investigate the significance difference between the students who have been given Project-Based Tasks and those who have not in their writing ability. Besides that, its purpose was to find out the students' motivation to write after the implementation of Project-Based Task. The research method was experimental quantitative study with two groups-pretest and posttest design. The population was eleventh grade of SMAN 1 Ngadirojo. The samples got from random sampling were XI IPA 3 as the experimental group and XI IPA 2 as the control group. Both groups were given writing test as the pretest and posttest. Then, the score was analyzed by using T-test. Another research instrument was motivation test which was given to the experimental group only and the result of it was presented in the form of percentage.

The result of this study showed that there was significant difference between the writing score of students who have been taught by using Project-Based Task and those who have not. It was proven by the t value that higher than the t table ($t_{\text{value}} > t_{0.05}$). The t value was 2,565 and the t table with the degree of freedom 60 (the closest to 57) was 2,000. From the motivation test result, the students mostly had higher motivation to write after the treatment given. Therefore, it can be concluded that Project-Based Task was effective to improve the eleventh graders' writing ability and improve their motivation to write.

Key Words: *Writing ability, Project-Based Task, motivation*

Abstrak

Menulis adalah salah satu kemampuan berbahasa Inggris yang seharusnya dapat dikuasai oleh siswa. Ini tergolong dalam kemampuan yang bersifat produktif dimana seseorang diharapkan untuk menyampaikan gagasannya kepada orang lain dalam secara tertulis. Dalam suatu komposisi tulisan, ada beberapa komponen yang perlu dipikirkan. Hal ini membuat menulis lebih rumit disbanding dengan kemampuan lainnya dalam bahasa Inggris. Disarankan untuk menciptakan kegiatan-kegiatan yang bermakna untuk mengajak siswa terlibat dalam proses pembelajaran. Seperti yang dikatakan oleh Tessema (2005) dalam jurnalnya bahwa *Project-Based Task* dapat memfasilitasi kebutuhan dan minat siswa, dan juga meningkatkan motivasi siswa.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meneliti perbedaan yang berarti pada kemampuan menulis siswa yang diberi *Project-Based Task* dan yang tidak. Selain itu, ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui motivasi siswa untuk menulis setelah penerapan *Project-Based Task*. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kuantitatif eksperimental dengan menggunakan dua grup *pretest-posttest*. Populasi penelitian adalah siswa kelas sebelas SMAN 1 Ngadirojo dan sampel yang diperoleh secara acak adalah XI IPA 3 sebagai eksperimental grup dan XI IPA 2 sebagai control grup. Kedua grup tersebut diberi tes menulis sebagai *pretest* dan *posttest*. Kemudian skor dari tes dianalisa menggunakan T-test. Instrumen penelitian lainnya yaitu *motivation test* yang diberikan hanya kepada grup eksperimental dan hasilnya disajikan dalam bentuk persentase.

Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan adanya perbedaan yang signifikan antara skor menulis siswa yang telah diajar menggunakan *Project-Based Task* dengan mereka yang tidak. Hal ini terbukti dengan adanya t value yang lebih tinggi dibanding dengan t table ($t_{\text{value}} > t_{\text{table}}$). T value sebesar 2,565 dan t table dengan df 60 (yang terdekat dengan 57) adalah 2,000. Hasil dari *motivation test* menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar siswa memiliki motivasi yang lebih besar untuk menulis setelah *treatment* diberikan. Dengan demikian, dapat disimpulkan bahwa *Project-Based Task* efektif untuk meningkatkan kemampuan menulis siswa kelas sebelas sekaligus meningkatkan motivasi mereka untuk menulis.

Kata Kunci: Kemampuan menulis, *Project-Based Task*, motivasi.

INTRODUCTION

English is considered as a difficult subject although it has been studied for a long time by the learners. Because of that, English teachers should create a creative teaching and learning activities to get more attention of their students and make them can learn it easily. To do so, a teacher may implement various teaching techniques, methodologies, or approaches. Besides that, the teacher can use many factors that might inspire the students to master foreign language in order to motivate the students. For instance, they might want to learn English because of their future dreams such as their careers, their willingness to study abroad and many other reasons.

In the 2006 curriculum, there are four English skills expected to be mastered by the students of senior high school. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Based on the curriculum's objectives, it can be said that the students are expected to be able to comprehend and express ideas through the four aforementioned skills of English (BSNP, 2006: 125). Students need to comprehend ideas through receptive skills (i.e. listening and reading) and express ideas through productive skills (i.e. speaking and writing).

Among those skills, writing is a skill that belongs to productive skill. It is used to communicate indirectly or without face-to-face interaction. Communicate means that it aims to express, deliver, or share any ideas with other. In writing skill, students use their writing composition to communicate with other. A writing composition is a task which involves the students in manipulating words in grammatically correct sentences from a piece of continuous writing which successfully communicate the contents through any ideas on a certain topic. All of the writers should produce ideas and connect them together coherently since writing products should be accepted and understood by the readers (Broek, et al., 2000: 711).

In this case, writing in a foreign language is not a simple exercise for most of the students. The things that make it difficult are not only the grammar and vocabulary mastery, but also the writers are demanded to organize their ideas clearly and coherently (Tessema, 2005: 22). Also, a writer usually passes through some stages to compose writing, starting from finding topic, collecting ideas, arranging ideas, and finally composing writing with the ideas gathered. Because of that difficulty and complicated steps, the students often lose their motivation and just write effortless. Those may bring negative effect on the students' writing result.

Besides the above problems, in a big and heterogeneous class as in Indonesia, there are many students with different needs and interests. But then a

teacher can use this diversity to invent a challenging and motivating writing lessons which can serve the students needs. The fact is that the students will respond positively to the meaningful activities that are appropriate with their interests and needs. If only the teacher is successful to fulfill the needs, then it will be an effective learning activity which can lead the students to achieve the learning objectives.

One of the ways to deal with those difficulties suggested by an expert is Project-Based Task. It provides students with complex tasks based on challenging questions or problems that involve the students' problem solving, decision making, investigative skills, and reflection that includes teacher facilitation. To solve the problem, the students' experience is one of important things that can support them while doing the task. Tessema says in his journal, "A classroom project, when well-planned, is a good way to motivate students to write because it offers the opportunity to match tasks with interesting topics that are relevant to the students," (2005: 23). Therefore the students' experience will be very useful in this task because the topics are usually the problems or issues that are faced by the students in their daily lives. Besides that, as the experience becoming one of sources to complete the task, it can automatically engage the students to do the task and let them easily invent an authentic writing. With the relevant topics which are related with their own experience, they will be more motivated in doing such task. And finally, the students' achievement will be reflected in the result of writing.

This study will be held in SMAN 1 Ngadirojo, one of senior high school in Pacitan. This will investigate the use of Project-Based Task to improve eleventh graders' ability in writing hortatory exposition text. In the end of the study, not only the effectiveness of the use of Project-Based Tasks to improve students' writing ability, but also the students' motivation to write after the implementation of Project-Based Task will be known. There are three criteria of the students' motivation will be investigated, i.e. students' motivation to write in English, students' motivation to join writing classes, and students' motivation to write in English for certain purposes.

Based on the above background of study, the researcher formulates some problems as follow:

1. Is there a significant difference between the students who are given Project-Based Task and those who are not in their ability to write hortatory exposition text?
2. Do the students have high motivation to write after the implementation of Project-Based Task?

Related to those research problems, this study aimed to investigate the differences between experimental and control group's writing ability. Besides that, its purpose

was to identify the students' motivation before and after the implementation of PBT.

Brown stated that the process of writing requires the steps of thinking, drafting, and revising procedures in generating ideas. In learning process of writing, students are focused on how to generate their ideas, how to organize them coherently and cohesively, how to revise text for clearer meaning, how to edit text for appropriate grammar, and how to produce a final product (2007: 391). Therefore, people may need some time to finish their writing in order to produce a well-ordered writing.

In a teaching of writing, it is important for teacher to be involved in the process of students' writing. According to Williams' statement, the teacher may ask the students "to write often in meaningful context". While the students are trying to write, the teacher should not let them finish their works by themselves. The teacher needs to give them some comments or feedbacks on students' work in progress because the role of teacher in such teaching model is as a coach. After that the students are required to revise their work based on the teacher's feedbacks, (2003: 101).

The student-centered is the teaching model which could be used to teach writing skill. It typically places the students as the center of learning and involves each of the students in real communication which starts from giving them fully controlled activities and going on to open ended one which need such a creative thinking (Collins & O'Brien, 2003: 338). Because of the focus of classroom activities is students, the teacher needs to provide students with chances to learn independently and cooperatively. It is in line with Williams' statement that collaboration is a natural part of the writing process, (2003: 294).

This study was conducted in the second semester of eleventh grade. Therefore, hortatory exposition text was used because it is in line with applied curriculum. Such text consists of three parts, i.e. thesis, arguments, recommendation (Joko Priyana et al., (2008: 138).

Each skill requires different ways of teaching because each skill has its own characteristics that match with certain teaching techniques, methodology, or approach. Approach is defined as the theories that describe the characteristics of language and language learning then it is served as the source of language teaching practices and principles (Harmer, 2007: 62). Project-Based Learning (PBL) is one of approaches that can be implemented to engage the students in writing classes. As stated by Blumenfeld et al., PBL is an approach to teaching and learning activities intended to interest and involve students in investigation of real problem (1991: 369), which is aimed to invent authentic learning tasks related to the students' need and interest

(Grant, 2009: 1). It means that the students are expected to be productively involved in the learning activity in order to successfully produce artifacts as the closing goal. That is the way how this approach attempts to engage the student indirectly.

The Project-Based Task (PBT), the focus of this study, is under the umbrella of Project-Based Learning (PBL). A project usually needs some times to finish. Hutchinson said that a project is an "extended piece of work" related to a certain topic on which the students have their right to determine how the content and the presentation will be (2001: 10). It means that although the teacher may provide the topic or the guidance but still the students themselves decide the content, arrangement, and its' presentation.

Some experts have positive point of view related to the use of project in teaching and learning activities. Blumenfeld et al., in one of his journals, said that projects are "adaptable" to be implemented in many learning situations (1991: 372). It can be applied for various learners' levels. The basic rule in a project is finished in an extended period but the rest depend on the teacher and students. How the teacher will give guidance, determine topics, and how the students will proceed with the project are all decided by the teacher and students. That is why a project can be designed to adjust the learning and learners conditions, age, level, students' knowledge and interest, students' need, available knowledge sources, time allocation and also school condition.

Related to students' motivation, Tessema said that "the aim of this project was to motivate students to write using project work" (2005: 26). The students will be motivated to cope with the challenge to complete the project because aside from finishing the task, they may also want to test their knowledge and get more knowledge while dealing with the real topics, issues, or problem they are going to write about (Blumenfeld et al., 1991: 374). By doing so, the students will get many inputs by themselves as the project proceeds. It will be much more precious rather than just listening to teachers' explanation without any practice and experience.

Tessema (2005: 23) proposed some basic principles of PBT as the followings:

1. The topics are around socially important issues that are related to the students' interest.
2. The student should conduct authentic investigation to find real sources to the topic.
3. The students should investigate social matters among others.
4. The students are required to create artifacts.
5. The students work collaboratively in group or pair.

According to Harmer, there are some steps or procedures in completing a project, i.e. the choice/the briefing, idea/language generation, data gathering, planning, drafting and editing, final version, and the last is consultation/tutorial, (2004: 103). Many things happen during the process of project task. What the students have been through during the project will bring various effects to the result. So the teacher should watch over all of the students' progress while they are doing the tasks.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design used in this study was true experimental design, i.e. two groups pretest-posttest. According to Donald Ary, the design can be drawn in this following table (2006: 307):

| Group | Pretest | Treatment | Posttest |
|-------|---------|-----------|----------|
| A | √ | √ | √ |
| B | √ | - | √ |

The research subject in this study was eleventh grade students in SMA Negeri 1 Ngadirojo, Pacitan. Two classes have been chosen by using random sampling and those would be the sample that involved in this study. Then the researcher determined the control and experimental group by using random assignment. The eleventh graders were chosen to be the research subject because the complexity of the task. Children in their age are adult enough so, it is considered that they have been able to do such task.

Two kinds of instruments were used in this study. The first instrument was writing test because it can help the researcher to answer the first question. These following steps were applied to meet the content validity of writing test:

- The researcher consulted the curriculum to compose the writing test.
- The researcher consulted some experts related to this field, e.g. UNESA lecturer and English teacher in SMAN 1 Ngadirojo.

Then, interrater reliability was used to determine the reliability of writing test. Based on Ary, this kind of reliability is done by having two or more person to judge the score of the thing being tested independently and later both scores (i.e. score from 1st scorer and score from 2nd scorer) need to be correlated (2006: 256). Pearson product moment (Pearson *r*) is used to measure the correlation between both scores because score is one of interval numbers (Ary, 2006: 130). From the calculation, the reliability was 0.87 which meant that the instrument was very reliable. After the reliability has been gained, the writing test result was analyzed by using writing rubric and T-test suggested by Bartz (1976) to know the differences between students' achievement before and

after the treatment, and also students' achievement in the control and experimental group.

Another instrument is questionnaire (motivation test) which collects the information to answer the second research problem has been stated above. The motivation test was in the form of objective questions, i.e. multiple choices. The test was adapted from International AMTB Research Project by Gardner (2004) and there were ten questions consist of three aspects that would be investigated. Those questions aimed to get the information about the students' motivation to write in English, to join writing classes, and also the students' motivation to write in English for certain purposes.

This test was administered before and after the treatment given to the experimental group. The students just simply answered the ten questions according to their own opinion. Then their motivation was categorized into three levels (i.e. high, moderate, and low) based on their answer. After two motivation tests have been held, then the results (the percentage of students' motivation levels) of the first and the second motivation test were compared. By doing so, the researcher knew whether there is improvement on the students' motivation to write.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

First of all, the significance of pretest results of both groups needs to be investigated in order to avoid unexpected influences to the posttest result. The result can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. The Significance of Pretest of Control and Experimental Group

| Group | Mean | t value | t _{.05} | Significance |
|--------------|------|---------|------------------|-----------------|
| Control | 6.50 | 0.959 | 2.000 | Not Significant |
| Experimental | 6.71 | | | |

The above table shows that the pretest score of both groups was not significantly different because the t value was lower than the t table (t value > t_{.05}). It means that the students' initial writing ability in both groups was at the same level.

Table 2. The Significance of Pretest-Posttest

| Group | Mean | | t value | t _{.05} | Significance |
|-------|------|------|---------|------------------|--------------|
| | Pre | Post | | | |
| Con. | 6.50 | 7.07 | 11.4 | 2.052 | Significant |
| Exp. | 6.71 | 7.66 | 19 | 2.042 | Significant |

Table 2 indicates that both groups had significant improvement on their writing ability. It is obviously seen that the control group has improved the mean of writing test, from 6.50 to 7.07. Also, the experimental group has significantly improved the mean, from 6.71 to 7.66.

Besides that the t values of both groups are precisely higher than the t tables.

Nevertheless, the researcher cannot merely conclude that both groups had equal improvement. Further investigation was needed to know whether the posttest results of control group and experimental group were equal or had significant difference. The result can be seen in this following table:

Table 3. The Significance of Posttest of Control and Experimental Group

| Group | Mean | t value | $t_{.05}$ | Significance |
|--------------|------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| Control | 7.07 | 2.565 | 2.000 | Significant |
| Experimental | 7.66 | | | |

The table shows that the mean of control group was significantly different from the mean of experimental group. Moreover, it has been proven by the t value which was higher than the t table ($t_{\text{value}} > t_{0.5}$). In other words, it can be said that although both groups had significant improvement on their writing scores, but undoubtedly the experimental group had greater improvement on it. Therefore, the technique implemented in the experimental group, Project-Based Task, was effective to significantly improve the students' writing ability.

In the motivation test, the whole students, 31 people, who are involved in the motivation test is reflected as 100%. The result of the test will be further explained in the following charts and its descriptions.

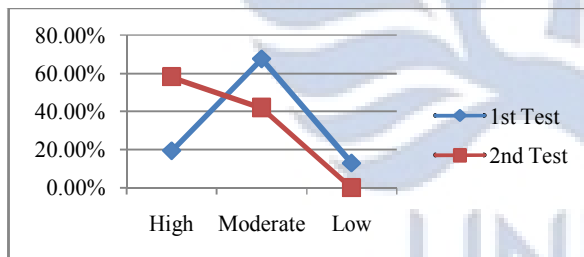


Figure 1. Students' Motivation to Write in English

It can be seen that out of 100% of the students, 19.36% had high motivation, 67.74% had moderate motivation, and 12.9% had low motivation to write in English during the first motivation test. Then after the treatment had been given, the result of motivation test became different. There are 58.07% had high motivation, 41.94% had moderate motivation, and no one had low motivation to write in English. It means that there was improvement on students' motivation to write in English after the treatment had been given to them.

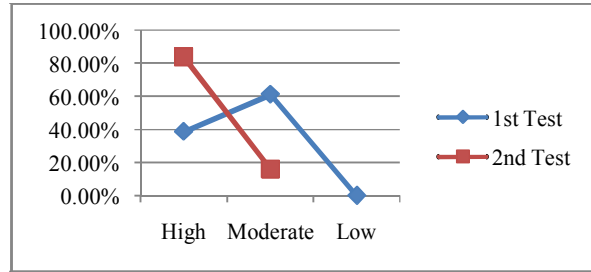


Figure 2. Students' Motivation to Join Writing Classes

Based on the above chart, there are 38.71% of the students who have high motivation, 61.29% have moderate motivation, and no one have low motivation to join writing classes during the first motivation test. Later on the second motivation test, the students who have high motivation become 83.87%, moderate motivation turn into 16.13%, and no one has low motivation. It is the same as the result of previous criteria that the students' motivation to join writing classes becomes higher after the treatment.

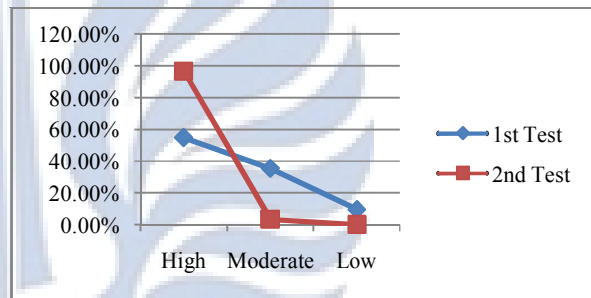


Figure 3. Students' Motivation to Write in English for Certain Purposes

The above chart describes the students' motivation based on the third criterion. In the first motivation test, it can be seen that there are 54.83% students have high motivation, 35.48% have moderate motivation, and 9.68% have low motivation to write in English for certain purposes. Whereas after the treatment, there are 96.77% students have high motivation, 3.23% has moderate motivation, and no one has low motivation to write in English for certain purposes. Based on those data, it can be said that the students' motivation in this criteria also increase after the treatment has been given to them. Besides that, it is also proved that Project-Based Task can be implemented in order to improve students' motivation to write in English, especially for certain purposes, such as to share ideas to other people and to support their future careers.

Discussion

As what expected in the previous hypothesis, Project-Based Task is an effective teaching technique to

be implemented in writing classes. This has been confirmed by the result of the research that the students of experimental group have significant improvement. It is in line with Tessema statement that Project-Based Task will give satisfaction to either the students or the teacher because they have succeeded completing such meaningful project work (2005: 27). Then, a question may arise. Does it guarantee that the conventional way of teaching writing is not effective to be implemented? The answer, once more, has been proved by the result of students writing test. From the posttest result, it is clear that experimental group has higher achievement than the control group, aside from the homogenous pretest result. Although the control group also significantly improves the writing ability, but it is not as much as what has been achieved by the experimental group.

Williams suggests that collaborative work is essential in writing process (2003: 294). In this project work, the students can easily learn how to write an essay since they learn it collaboratively. The students get more input from the other member of their group. Working with partner or team is usually better than working individually. Besides that, it allows the teacher to help the students during the writing process. During the process of writing, the students interactively complete the task in every stage, started from determining the topic, brainstorming, finding real sources, drafting, peer editing, until final drafting. Compared with the students in control group, the students in experimental group get much more input than the students in control group then it reflected on the better final result.

Another thing that still needs to be further analyzed is about the students' motivation to write. As Tessema said that the purpose of implementing Project-Based Task is to motivate the students to write (2005: 26). The result of this research proves that Project-Based Task is able to improve students' motivation to write. It is in line with the earlier hypothesis in this study that the students have high motivation after Project-Based Task has been implemented in their writing class.

Based on the result of motivation test, most of students have higher motivation in the second motivation test than in the first one. It gives evidence that the Project-Based Task can be one of the motivation boosters for the students to write in English. It is also in line with Blumenfeld's statement that the students will be more motivated to cope with the challenge to complete the project (Blumenfeld et al., 1991: 374). The result of the motivation test is also hand in hand with the students' increased writing scores. As the motivation becomes higher, the students writing scores also improve significantly.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

Based on the research results, it was found that:

1. PBT is effective to improve the eleventh graders' ability to write hortatory exposition text.
There was significant difference in writing scores between the students who have been taught by using PBT and those who have not. At the beginning of the research, the students' writing ability in both groups was homogeneous because the t value of pretest result was lower than the t table ($t_{.05}$). But then after the treatment was given, there was significant difference in the writing scores between those groups.
2. PBT increases the students' motivation to write.
The students had higher motivation after Project-Based Task had been implemented. Most of them had positive responses toward this approach. They had better motivation to write in English, join writing classes, and also write in English for certain purposes.

Suggestions

After conducting this study, the researcher proposes some suggestions as the followings:

1. Due to the long time needed finish a project; it is better that Project-Based Task is used for extensive writing activity.
2. The teacher should allow the students to choose their own topic because it is related to the students' interest that will influence the writing result.
3. The teacher may ask the students to give routine report during the process of completing the project. The report is about the progress of students' work.

REFERENCES

- Ary, D. et al. 2006. *Introduction to Research in Education*. 8th Edition. Belmonth: Wadsworth.
- Bartz, A. E. 1976. *Basic Statistical Concept in Education and the Behavioral Sciences*. Minnesota: Burgess Publishing Company.
- Blumenfeld, Phyllis C. et al. 1991. Motivating Project-Based Learning: Sustaining the Doing, Supporting the Learning. *Educational Psychologist (Online)*, Vol. 26, No. 3, 369-398, (www.scholar.google.com, accessed on June 16th 2013).
- Broek, Paul V. D. et al. 2000. The Role of Causal Discourse Structure in Narrative Writing. *Memory and Cognition (Online)*, Vol. 28, No. 5, 711-721, (www.google.com, accessed on June 9th 2013).

Brown, H. Douglas. 2007. *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. White Plains, New York: Pearson Education Limited.

Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan (BSNP). 2006. *Standar Isi untuk Satuan Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah: Standar Kompetensi dan Kompetensi Dasar SMA/MA*. Jakarta: Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan (BSNP).

Collins, J. W., and O'Brien, N. P. (Eds.). 2003. *Greenwood Dictionary of Education*. Westport: Greenwood.

Gardner, R. C. 2004. *Attitude/Motivation Test Battery: International AMTB Research Project*. Canada: The University of Western Ontario.

Grant, Michael M. 2009. Understanding Projects in Project-Based Learning: A Students' Perspective. *American Educational Research Association*, (<http://www.bie.org/research/>, accessed on June 8th 2013).

Harmer, J. 2004. *How to Teach Writing*. Edinburg Gate, Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Harmer, J. 2007. *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. Fourth Edition. Edinburg Gate, Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Hutchinson, Tom. 2001. *Introduction to Project Work*. Second Edition. England: Oxford University Press.

Priyana, Joko et al. 2008. *INTERLANGUAGE: English for Senior High School Students XI Science and Social Study Programme: SMA/MA Kelas XI IPA/IPS*. Jakarta: Pusat Perbukuan, Departemen Pendidikan Nasional.

Tessema, K. Assefa. 2005. Stimulating Writing through Project-Based Tasks. *English Teaching Forum*, Vol. 43 No. 4, 22-28, (www.exchanges.state.gov, accessed on September 23rd 2013).

Williams, J. D. 2003. *Preparing to Teach Writing*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.