

DEVELOPING STUDENTS' DESCRIPTIVE TEXT WRITING ABILITY THROUGH REALIA

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Abstract: The objectives of this research were to find out whether teaching using realia can develop students' descriptive text writing ability at the second year of SMPN 2 Bandar Mataram. The quantitative data (students' score) was used to see the students' ability in writing descriptive text (learning product). The subject of the research was the students of class VIII.A in the academic year 2012/2013. Pretest and post test experimental design was used in this research. Pre-test and post-test were administered to measure students' ability in writing descriptive text before and after treatments. The scoring system was based on five aspects; they are content, organization, vocabulary, grammar and mechanic. The result shows that there is an increase of students' ability in writing descriptive text after treatments using realia as media. It can be concluded that teaching using realia increased the ability of students in writing descriptive text. Therefore, the writer suggests to English teacher to apply realia as one of the alternative ways to increase the students' descriptive text writing ability.

Keywords: *descriptive text, pretest-post test design, realia, teaching using realia, writing aspects, writing ability*

MENGEMBANGKAN KETRAMPILAN MENULIS DESKRIPTIF MEMELALUI REALIA

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Abstrak: Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mencari tahu apakah mengajar menggunakan realia bisa mengembangkan kemampuan menulis teks deskriptif siswa pada kelas dua SMPN 2 Bandar Mataram. Data kuantitatif (nilai siswa) digunakan untuk melihat kemampuan siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif (hasil pembelajaran). Sasaran penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas VIII.A tahun ajaran 2012/1013. Desain yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah desain pretest post test. Pre-test dan post-test diberikan untuk mengukur kemampuan siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif sebelum dan sesudah perlakuan. Sistem penilaian didasarkan pada lima aspek, yaitu konten, organisasi, kosakata, tata bahasa dan mekanik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ada peningkatan kemampuan siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif setelah perlakuan menggunakan realia sebagai media. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa mengajar menggunakan realia dapat meningkatkan kemampuan siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif. Oleh karena itu, penulis menyarankan kepada guru bahasa inggris untuk menerapkan realia dalam mengajar teks deskriptif.

Kata kunci: *aspek menulis, desain pretest post test, kemampuan menulis, realia, realia, teks deskriptif,*

Introduction

According to School Based Curriculum, the goal of teaching learning English at Junior High School is that the students must be able to develop communicative competence in written as well as in spoken to achieve functional literacy level. Based on the curriculum, the students are taught by using text as media. There are some kinds of texts that have to be learnt by the second year of Junior High School, one of the texts is descriptive text, while the definition of descriptive according to Crimmon (1983:163), descriptive is strategy for presenting a verbal portrait of a person, a place or a thing. It can be used as a technique to enrich other forms of writing or as a dominant strategy for developing an object of what it look like. It means that when we describe something, we need to capture the details so that the reader can understand what we mean.

Furthermore, McKay (1985:4) says that when we want to describe something, we must be able to make the reader understand what we mean. McKay mentions also the most common types of descriptive of describing a process, describing an object, describing a place, describing a personality, and describing an event. In this learning process the students have to be able to understand the content and create the descriptive text based on its generic structure.

In fact, students often feel frustrated when their English teacher asks them to compose a piece of writing because they do not understand well about grammar, student lack vocabulary and they have difficulties in expressing the information into

the written form. Many students complain that they do not know how to write and they cannot link sentences into coherence ideas.

Diharyono's research finding (1990:1) shows that students know or have the ideas of what they are going to write but they do not know how to put them into words. Those can be caused by the student's factor, the teacher's factor, or the process of teaching writing.

Therefore, the uses of various teaching media are necessary for motivating students in learning English especially in writing skill, as well as for adjusting the material and avoiding the students' boredom. By using appropriate media the teacher will be able to perform well in the teaching learning process and simultaneously will be able to achieve the target. Therefore, in this research the writer used realia as media. According to Soames (2009) in his article states that in the Teaching English as Foreign Language (TEFL) classroom, the word realia means using real items found in everyday life as an aid to teaching English. It means that realia is all items in the world but not all of realia is possible to be used as media in language learning.

In this case, teaching learning process has role in achieving the target of learning, Lado (1959:125) states that simply the goal of teaching foreign language is the ability to use it, to understand the speech and its native and target culture in terms of their meaning as well as their great ideas in achievement.

In teaching writing, the teacher also has to pay attention to the students' capacities. Finnochiaro (1964:129) states that in order to be successful in writing, the material

has to be relevant to the students' interest, needs, capacities, and ages until they are able to make a composition with view or even no errors.

According to the statements above, it is clear that in teaching writing the teacher should guide the students how to write or how to express their ideas in writing form.

In fact, many English teachers still teach writing in conventional way and seldom use media and technique in teaching writing text (Noprianto, 2007:59). Consequently, the students would easily get bored in writing class and thought that writing is boring and difficult to be learnt and to be done.

Therefore, in this case the teacher is demanded to be creative in teaching learning, especially in teaching writing. The teacher can use the appropriate media or effective methods in order to achieve the goal stated in English curriculum.

The researcher conducted this research at the second year of SMP N 2 Bandar Mataram, Central Lampung. According to the observation which had been conducted, the researcher assumes that the students of that school especially at the second year still have difficulties in arranging the words into sentence. Beside that, the students also lack grammar and vocabulary. Therefore, the researcher thinks that it is necessary for the students to be taught how to have a mastery of grammar and vocabulary. After that, in order to achieve the goal of this research, the researcher also taught the students how to put the words into sentence in the form of descriptive text. Those are the reasons why the researcher conducted writing in that school.

In this research, the researcher used realia as media to help students in learning writing. Realia could attract students to focus in what they see and it could stimulate their minds to think about the object. The researcher chose realia because realia is media that can give an unforgettable impression. Jones (1994) states that experience with real things which will interact in students' daily life is the best learning situation.

In reference to the background above, the research problem can be formulated like the following;

Is there any increase of descriptive text writing ability of students taught through realia at the second year of SMPN 2 Bandar Mataram?

The objective of the research is to investigate whether teaching using realia can increase the students' descriptive text writing ability at the second year of SMPN 2 Bandar Mataram.

Method

This study applied one-group pretest-post test design of pre-experimental design. In this research the students were given pretest before treatment and they were given post test after treatment. The researcher used one class as the sample of the research.

The design can be presented as follows:

T1 X T2

T1 means pre-test

X means treatment

T2 means post-test

The pre test was done to find out the students' basic ability in writing descriptive text before treatment. Then, treatments were done to guide the students in writing descriptive text. The last, post test was done to find out the students' increase in writing descriptive text. It was also to make sure that realia could be used to increase students' writings.

Population and sample is necessary in a research, it was also in this research. The researcher did research in a school; it was Junior High School level, where the population of this research was the students of SMPN 2 Bandar Mataram, Lampung Tengah in the year 2011-2012 Class 2. There were 4 classes for second year and the researcher took one class of the second year students. The researcher took the sample by choosing one class as the target of the research. The class was the second grade of Junior High School; this class was class VIII A. In this research, the researcher evaluated the students' writing based on five aspects of writing. According to Heaton (1991: 135) there are five aspects evaluated in writing; they are content, organization, vocabulary, grammar and mechanic. The following table presents the five aspects of evaluating which was used.

Table 3.1. Table of Specification

| No | Aspect of Writing | Definition | Percentage |
|----|-------------------|---|------------|
| 1 | Content | The substance of the writing, the idea expressed. | 20 % |
| 2 | Organization | The form of content (coherence). | 20 % |
| 3 | Vocabulary | The selection of word that suitable with the content. | 20 % |
| 4 | Grammar | The employment of grammatical forms and syntactic patterns. | 20 % |
| 5 | Mechanic | The conventional devices used to clarify the meaning. | 20 % |

Result and Discussion

In order to know the basic ability of students in writing descriptive text before treatments, the writer conducted pre-test. The scores of the five aspects of writing tested in the pre-test are presented in the following table.

Table 1. The Students' Average Scores of the Pre-test

| Pre-test | The evaluated components of writing | | | | | Total |
|----------|-------------------------------------|--------------|------------|---------|----------|-------|
| | Content | Organization | Vocabulary | Grammar | Mechanic | |
| Average | 11.72 | 7.35 | 11.02 | 8.25 | 5.42 | 44.22 |

The table above shows us the average scores of five aspects of writing tested in the pre-test. The scores of the five aspects are: content 11.72, organization 7.35, Vocabulary 11.02, Grammar 8.25 and mechanic 5.42; while the mean of the pre-test is 44.22. The table also shows the basic ability of students in writing descriptive text before treatments by the researcher. In the result of pre-test only 1 (5%) who got score higher than 60.

The scores of the five aspects of writing tested in the post-test are presented as follow.

Table 2. The Students' Average Scores of the Post-test

| Post-test | The evaluated components of writing | | | | | Total |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|--------------|------------|---------|----------|-------|
| | Content | Organization | Vocabulary | Grammar | Mechanic | |
| Average | 16.7 | 11.8 | 15.75 | 11.52 | 9.92 | 65.15 |

The table above presents the ability of students in writing descriptive text after treatments by the researcher. From the table it can be seen the average scores of five aspects of writing tested in the post-test. They are content 16.7, organization 11.8,

vocabulary 15.75, grammar 11.52 and mechanic 9.92. The mean of the post-test is 65.15. We can see the increasement of the scores from the pre-test to post-test in each aspect. There are 11 students (55%) who got score higher than 60.

The increase of students' five aspects in writing descriptive text can be seen in the table below.

Table 3. The Increase of Students' Score

| Aspect | Pre-test | Post-test | Increase |
|---------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Content | 11.72 | 16.7 | 4.98 |
| Organization | 7.35 | 11.8 | 4.45 |
| Vocabulary | 11.02 | 15.75 | 4.73 |
| Grammar | 8.25 | 11.52 | 3.27 |
| Mechanic | 5.42 | 9.92 | 4.5 |

From the table above, it could be stated that realia could increase each aspect of writing; they are content, organization, vocabulary, grammar and mechanic. The highest increase was content and the lowest was grammar. It can be concluded that teaching writing using realia can increase students' ability in writing descriptive text, especially content.

The first aspect that increased was content. It had highest increase. It happened because realia helped them in determining main idea. Besides made easier in determining main idea, realia also could help them in developing their main idea by observing the realia they had. From the realia, the students got information that could support their writing. Therefore, the score of this aspect of writing could increase.

The second aspect that increased was organization aspect. It happened because realia made the text had clearly stated controlling idea or central focus. By using realia, the students focused on one topic.

The next aspect that increased was vocabulary. It happened because realia helped the students in enriching words. Realia stimulated them to put word by word that related to the thing (realia) they described.

The fourth aspect that increased was grammar. It happened because the researcher taught descriptive text by giving the example of descriptive text with right grammar then explained about the grammar to the students. Realia also helped the researcher in improving students' grammar by showing the realia and made some sentence about the realia with the right grammar. For example; the researcher showed an orange and made some sentence like "I have an orange. It is Mandarin orange. My apple has round shape. It has yellow color..." after that the researcher explained to the students about grammar, the underline words were the example of right grammar. The researcher explained when "*have*" and "*has*" have to be used and when "*is, am, are*" have to be used.

The last aspect that increased was mechanic. Mechanic had the lowest increase. Although the researcher tried to increase the students' score in mechanic aspect by asking the students to check the right spelling of a difficult word in the dictionary if they were not sure how to spell it, the researcher still found the most of the students

had problem in writing the right spelling of words. The students also had problem in punctuation and capitalization.

Jones' (1994) theory who says that experience with real thing which will interact in students' daily life is the best learning situation.

In daily life of students, they usually interact with real thing like food, television, place, and many things. They must be having favorite food, an idol they see on television, favorite place they ever visited. Therefore, the writer thought that the students will be interested when they interact with their favorite things like food. In this research the writer proved Jones' theory by giving realia as media to the students in learning writing descriptive text. In fact, they attracted and enthusiastic in writing descriptive text.

Conclusion and Suggestion

Referring to the discussion of the research in the previous chapter, the writer comes to this following conclusion:

There are so many media helping teacher in increasing students' ability in writing descriptive text. Realia is just one of them. The implementation of teaching writing using appropriate realia as media increased the students' descriptive text writing ability. This increase can be seen from the mean score of pre-test 44.22 up to 65.15 in post-test.

In reference to the conclusions above, the researcher would like to give some suggestions for the other researchers and teachers as the following points:

a. Suggestions to other researcher

The Researcher suggest to the other researcher to apply realia in improving students' vocabulary because the research proved that realia could stimulate the students to enrich their vocabulary.

b. Suggestions to the teachers

The researcher suggest to English teachers to apply realia as one of the alternative ways to increase the students' descriptive text writing ability because realia can attract the students to write.

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