

***R.A.F.T* as a Strategy for Teaching Writing Functional Text to Junior High School Students**

Teza Peby Alisa¹, Rusdi Noor Rosa²

English Department
FBS State University of Padang
email: tezazhazha@yahoo.com

Abstrak

Tujuan penulisan makalah ini adalah untuk menjelaskan mengenai penerapan strategi *R.A.F.T* (*Role, Audience, Format, Topic*) guna memotivasi siswa dalam menulis pada satuan pendidikan Sekolah Menengah Pertama (SMP). Melalui makalah ini diharapkan akan memberikan hal yang bermanfaat bagi para guru dalam mengajarkan siswa untuk menulis. Selanjutnya, dengan menggunakan strategi *R.A.F.T* (*Role, Audience, Format, Topic*) ini diharapkan mampu menjadi alternatif untuk meningkatkan kemampuan menulis siswa Sekolah Menengah Pertama (SMP). Strategi ini mampu meningkatkan perhatian dan motivasi siswa selama kegiatan menulis berlangsung. Siswa juga mudah untuk berbagi ide saat menulis *Functional Text*. Selanjutnya, strategi ini mampu meningkatkan motivasi menulis siswa dan membuat kerja kelompok mereka bermanfaat dalam belajar bahasa Inggris. Kemudian guru juga berkesempatan untuk mengajarkan bahasa Inggris, terutama menulis, dengan lebih menyenangkan.

Key words: *R.A.F.T*, teaching writing, functional text, junior high school

A. Introduction

When learning English as a foreign language, the learners are required to be able to communicate with other people by using the language; understand them, talk to them, read what they have written and write to them. Therefore, the learners should have four competence in English; listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, the learners sometimes have to communicate with each other through writing. As stated in Harmer (2007) there are many reasons to write, for example when someone wants to express his or her ideas, thoughts and experiences to others without the pressure of face-to-face communication, he or she can write to deliver them. Therefore, it can be said that writing is very important to be mastered by the learners beside the other skills.

Related to the ideas above, government includes writing as a part of English curriculum. In teaching writing to junior high school based on Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan 2006, the students are supposed to be able to produce two kinds of texts, they are functional texts (announcement, short message, advertisement, label, sign, notice, invitation and advertisement) and monologue texts (procedure, descriptive, recount, narrative and report). It can be said that

¹ The writer of paper from English Department for graduation period March 2013.

² Advisor, the lecturer of FBS State University of Padang.

teaching writing to junior high school is more focus to functional texts rather than monologue texts.

In fact, learning to write in English, especially in writing functional text seems difficult for junior high school students. It can be caused by the students themselves and also by the teacher. For the students, they think that it is hard to write a short functional text because it is difficult to organize their idea. They have already had the ideas in their mind, but they do not know how to express it in written form. It is not the only reason why writing functional text is hard; it is also caused by the teacher. She just gives one example of functional text such as advertisement to the students then, asked them to write and she did not guiding them how to write.

Based on those problems above, as a teacher, it is significant to help the students to solve the problems in writing activity. The teacher should create and implement a new strategy to teach writing. The strategy should be interesting, helpful, and fun in order to support the students feel happy to write. There are many strategies in teaching writing, one of them is using R.A.F.T strategy in order to encourage junior high school students to write and produce a good functional texts.

R.A.F.T is chosen as a strategy to encourage students to write creatively, to think a topic from various points of view, to a specific audience in a variety formats of functional text. R.A.F.T is an acronym which stands for Role, Audience, Format and Topic. This strategy guides the students to consider what the topic for their writing is, who they are as a writer, who will read their writing, and in what forms their writing will be before they write.

This paper describes how teacher can use R.A.F.T strategy to guide the students to write functional text. It is limited into using R.A.F.T strategy in teaching writing advertisement text as one of functional texts to junior high school students. Before they write an advertisement text, the teacher encourages the students to organize their idea by considering their role, audience, form, and topic as a writer. The purpose of this paper is to explain the use of R.A.F.T strategy to encourage junior high school students' writing ability, especially in writing a functional text. Through this paper, it is expected to give the advantage thing to the teachers in teaching students to write.

Learning to write is not as simple as learning to speak the language. Most of writing takes time because it is planned. Gebhard (2006:211) says that it deals with the choice of words, the use of appropriate structure (grammar, subject, verb, tenses, etc), the words order (syntax), punctuation, spelling and the organization of ideas into coherence and cohesive form which make writing skill is more complicated. However, a speaker just uses voices (pitch, stress and rhythm) and gestures to express it.

Writing includes certain stages. Brown (1994: 10) stated that the stages in writing activity; (1) prewriting stages, (2) writing stages which include generating ideas, organizing ideas and writing the first draft, (3) rewriting, that consist of two separate processes: revising and editing. According to Nunan (2003:23) stated that writing is a both a process and product. The writer imagines, organizes, drafts, edits, reads, and rereads.

Based on *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan* (2006), teaching English to junior high school is expected to raise functional level. The students should be able to communicate both oral and written form in a daily life. The aim is to understand and produce the text in functional level. Therefore, teaching writing to junior high school students is more focus on producing functional text rather than monologue text.

Azis (2011) states that a functional text is a short text that gives a specific purpose. This specialized text provides information and directions to help a reader. It contains the command, direction, something to be done or should not be done which may be instruction, shopping list, memo or short message, notices, invitation card, announcement, advertisement, label, brochure, e-mail, leaflet, graph, and greeting card.

Based on *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan 2006* in Santoso (2011) for teaching in Junior High School, the types are reduced into; memo, notice, invitation card, announcement, greeting card, advertisement. Advertisement is any public notice, as a printed display in a newspaper, short film on television, announcement on radio which is used to attract public attention. The language used in advertisement is; correct or suitable words, interesting, attractive, persuasive and suggestive expression.

B. Discussion

Teaching English writing in the junior high school is based on phases stated by Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan in Permendiknas No.41 Tahun 2007 (Standar Proses) that there are three phases for teaching activities:

1. Pre teaching activities, the teacher prepares and motivates the students to learn. After that, teacher build students' background knowledge about the lesson includes giving model to students about the lesson, and introducing the teaching objective.
2. Whilst- teaching activities, including exploration, elaboration and confirmation.
3. Post- teaching activities. In this phase, the teacher and the students conclude the lesson well individually or cooperatively. At the end of the lesson, the teacher should convey lesson plan for next meeting in order that the students can prepare themselves at home.

Hairston in Gebhard (2006:211) said that the teacher should understand the process of how their preparation until they produce their writing. The preparation can be done by applying R.A.F.T strategy to help them express the meaning in a clear way. R.A.F.T is first introduced by Santa and Havens in 1995. The acronym stands for Role, Audience, Format and Topic. Flood (2009:128) said that R.A.F.T strategy gives students a choice to consider earlier to drafting their work. First, they need to consider what is the role that they author will be when writing the text. Second, they have to consider their audience that they will address. After that, they should think what the format of their writing is. The last one, they also need to think the topic for their writing.

It is best for the teacher to prepare material; media and lesson plan before coming to the class because language learners succeed if the learning process

gives them a positive, relaxing and enjoyable experience the teacher should understand how to present the lesson with appropriate technique to be successful in teaching. These are some steps that should be done by the teacher in using R.A.F.T Strategy in teaching writing.

1. Teacher's preparation

Teachers have to do a preparation before they come to the classroom in order to do the teaching-learning process run well.

There are several important things that must be prepared before teaching the lesson. They are:

a. Material

The material has to be interesting for them in teaching writing, especially in teaching functional text. The teacher prepares some example of advertisement. In order to get authentic material, the teacher can bring material that can be found in the internet or magazines.

b. Media Preparation

The media should be appropriate with material and interesting for students. In this case, the teacher should be careful to choose an advertisement which is simple and appropriate for the students. First, the teacher shows an advertisement video to activate their background knowledge about the text. Second, the teacher brings some posters of advertisement to discuss the components of the text.

c. Lesson Plan

When creating the lesson plan, there are several essential elements in preparing lesson plan. They are; objective, material, limitation of time which is used by the teacher and teaching activities.

2. Teaching Process

a. Pre - teaching activity

In this stage, the teacher prepares the students, both psychologically and physically to involve in the learning process. The teacher may begin the lesson by greeting the students in order to catch their attention. The teacher is also expected to bridge the students' mind to the topic being discussed. To do so, the teacher can show them an advertisement video and after that, she can ask them some questions about advertisement.

Then, the teacher introduces R.A.F.T strategy to the students by explaining them that every writer needs to consider four components, they are; Role, Audience, format and topic. After that, the teacher also tells the students about the objective materials that will be learned.

b. Whilst teaching activities

1. Exploration

In exploration activity, the teacher checks how far students' knowledge about advertisement text by showing them two different posters which sell the same product. Then, the teacher asking them these following questions:

a. What is the first poster about?

- b. What about the second poster?
- c. Are these poster same?
- d. Is there any differences?
- e. What did the posters say?

These questions will check how far students' knowledge about the advertisements and it also will pull out their curiosity about. After that, the teacher discusses the differences between the two advertisements eventhough it sells the same product and explains to the students that is the reason why during writing, they need to consider the role, audience, format, and topic because different role, audience, format and topic will affect the writing itself by showing them the posters. So, it can be concluded that those advertisements are different because they have different audience although they sell the same product.

Before explaining how to write a good advertisement text, the teacher should explain the communicative purpose of an advertisement text first and continued to the language features of the text (Use correct or suitable, interesting, attractive, persuasive sentence and use suggestive expression).

2. Elaboration

In this activity, the teacher divides students into several groups. The teacher uses strategy which is called R.A.F.T. The purpose of this strategy is to encourage students to write an advertisement text easier and interesting. Firstly, the students are divided into group of four then, teacher tells them that they are going to structure their writing around these elements:

Role : who are you as a writer?

Audience: Who will read your writing?

Format: what kind of form will it take?

Topic: what will the advertisement about?

For example, the teacher tells that she or he is going to write an advertisement about milk. To explain why a writer needs to consider R.A.F.T when she or he writes, the teacher shows two kinds of R.A.F.T in the table (figure 1) and differentiates one of the components. Here, the teacher makes the same role, format and topic but differentiates the audience. The teacher also lists some vocabularies that may be used in the format table.

Idea :	R	A	F	T
selling milk	Milk seller	Teenagers	Advertisement -using attractive sentence -using suggestive expression Vocabularies: grow up, need, let, fat, drink,	Drink milk without worrying the fat

			available	
	Milk seller	Old people	Advertisement -using attractive sentence -using suggestive expression Vocabularies: Protect, strength, get, drink	Drink milk without worrying the fat

Figure 1

After displaying a complete R.A.F.T example in front of the class, the teacher discuss the key elements together. Next, she shows the students how to write it into an advertisement text based on the structure of advertisement text, R.A.F.T and the vocabularies given. First the teacher writes the first R.A.F.T into advertisement text.

First advertisement:

To grow up you need higher calcium than adult, but don't let the milk make your body fat!

Drink tastier "ABC Milk" for stay fit and slim!!

Available in vanilla, strawberry and chocolate favor!!Get it now in your nearest store!

Then teacher writes out the second R.A.F.T beside the first advertisement.

Second advertisement:

Protect your bone from osteoporosis from now. Get your bone strength within 4 weeks.

Drink "ABC Milk" high calcium, low fat milk!

Get your bone health!

And the teacher concludes why considering R.A.F.T before writing is really important because by having one different component will result different advertisement. The teacher also concludes how to make a good advertisement by its structure, for example; using correct or suitable, interesting, attractive, persuasive sentence and using suggestive expression.

The group is asked to make one R.A.F.T table. The teacher asks the group to think about some ideas and the group make role, audience, format and topic based on the idea but differentiate one of the components. Then, she writes down on the board the suggestion of roles, audience, format, topic for advertisement text from each group.

3. Confirmation

In confirmation section, each of group's members writes the advertisement text individually based on the R.A.F.T that they got. Here,

the teacher helps the students by giving the list of vocabularies that probably used in their writing and also controls the students while they are writing the text. After that, the teachers and the students all together try to find the difficulties in writing advertisement text. Finally, takes the number of the group randomly to come to in front of the class to show and read their advertisement text in front of the class. This way has a purpose to make the students more understand about the lesson.

c. Post teaching activity (5 minutes)

In this stage, the teacher gives feedback to the students toward the process and learning achievement, it can be like giving reward to every group that have finished their writing well. Then the teacher concludes or summarizes the lesson by her/him or together with the students. The teacher reviews the activities that have been done consistently.

C. The Advantages of Using the Take Turn Writing

There are a lot of advantages of using R.A.F.T strategy in increasing and motivating students to write at Junior High School. They are:

- a. R.A.F.T strategy will help students to understand their role as writer, the audience they will address, the variety format and the topic of their writing.
- b. This strategy provides opportunities for the students to demonstrate their understanding of a topic or subject through a writing experience that helps them to think about subject and communicate their understanding of it in creative and interesting way.
- c. This strategy can be great pre-writing tool because it encourages students to organize their thoughts and brings life and creativity their writing.
- d. After finished R.A.F.T assignment, the students will more proficient to develop their style of writing.
- e. At the end, this strategy increases the students' motivation in writing, because when the students can keep their attention and they are interested with the writing activity, they automatically will increase their motivation in learning English.

D. Conclusion and Suggestion

Based on the discussion in the previous chapters, it can be concluded that the teacher should pay more attention to the strategy used in teaching writing. The teacher is expected to be a good teacher in facilitating the learning process. R.A.F.T strategy can be chosen for the alternative strategy to teach writing skill especially in writing functional text. This strategy encourages students to write creatively, to think a topic from various points of view, to a specific audience in a variety formats of functional texts because to convey the reader, the writer needs to consider those aspects. Beside, the teachers have the opportunity to teach of English, especially in writing, more delightful.

Teaching writing in the class can be interesting if the teacher can choose the techniques creatively. R.A.F.T strategy gives a contribution in motivating students in writing activity. The writer suggests the following points:

1. *The teacher should be creative in selecting and using the interesting and appropriate technique to the students. So that it make the classroom activities more enthusiastic, especially in teaching writing.*
2. The teacher should know what the common problem that is faced by the students as he/she could decide which technique will be used to solve that problem.
3. The teachers use real object and media such as pictures that closely related to student's life that make it easier for students to find the ideas in writing.
4. Teacher should be creative in organizing a good teaching and learning process. He/she has to be able to choose meaningful teaching media and activities which are based on student's need. It is suggested that English teacher should find an interesting and simple technique that is practical for teacher and students.

Note: This article is written based on the writer's paper under supervision of Rusdi Noor Rosa, S.S., M.Hum

References

- Aziz, Abdul. 2011. Short functional text. Retrieved from <http://mmursyidpw.com/> retrieved on September 12, 2012.
- BadanStandarNasionalPendidikan. 2007. *PerMenDikNas RI No. 41 tahun 2007*. <http://www.4shared.com/> Retrieved on 18,November 2011.
- Brown, H. Douglas. 1994. *Teaching by Principle an Interaction Approach to Language Pedagogy*. San Francisco: University Prentice Hall.
- Depdiknas. 2006. *Standar Kompetensi Mata Pelajaran Bahasa Inggris Sekolah Menengah pertama dan Madrasah tsanawiyah*. Jakarta: Depdiknas
- Flood, James., et al . 2005. in Indrisano, Roselmina & Paratore, Jeanne R. *Learning to write, Writing to Learn*. Newark: International Reading Association, inc.
- Harmer, Jeremy. 2007. *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. PEARSON Longman
- Gebhard, J.G. 2006. *Teaching English as a Foreign or Second Language: A Teacher Self-Development and Methodology Guide*. Ann Arbor: The Uniiversity of Michigan Press.
- Nation, I.S.P.(2009). *Teaching ESL/EFL Reading Writing*. New York: Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data.

Nunan, David. 2003. *Practical English Language Teaching*. New York: McGraw Hill

Santosa, Budi. 2011. Short Functional Text. Retrieved from <http://www.englishindo.com/>. Retrieved on September 12, 2012.

