Using Neuro-Linguistic Programming in Writing a Descriptive Text in Junior High School

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Abstrak

Pengajaran *writing* merupakan hal baru bagi siswa kelas 7 yang baru saja lulus dari Sekolah Dasar. Oleh karena itu guru membutuhkan suatu teknik pengajaran yang dapat membuat siswa mampu menulis kalimat dalam suatu paragraf, khususnya paragraf deskriptif. Artikel ini membahas penggunaan Neuro-Linguistic Programming, suatu teknik pengajaran *writing* di mana inti dari penerapannya adalah *modeling* (memperagakan) sebelum meminta siswa melakukan prosedurnya. Kelebihan teknik ini adalah langkah-langkah di dalam prosedurnya yang dapat membuat siswa mengingat dan membayangkan kembali (*digging memory)* informasi yang diperlukan dalam membuat sebuah teks deskriptif. Teknik pengajaran ini melibatkan siswa aktif secara verbal sehingga dapat membuat siswa tidak bosan dalam belajar *writing*.

Kata kunci: Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), writing, descriptive text, junior high school

A. Introduction

Generally, there are four major skills (speaking, reading, listening and writing) in English that should be mastered. One of the four major skills is writing, which is considered to be the most difficult skill in English for non-English native speakers because, in writing, the writer explains their ideas along with the correct grammar.

Writing is included in the curriculum system. As in grade 7 of Junior High School, students learn about the descriptive text. However, it is found that teachers just teach about comprehension of the text given to students, not how to write it in the learning process. Many students do not have enough vocabulary. These can be a challenge in teaching writing a descriptive paragraph to grade seven students.

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It is believed that writing a descriptive paragraph in grade seven is quite easy. Most of students' textbook present descriptions about person or animal, things and place along with simple vocabularies. By including that simple vocabulary, teachers should have taught writing to the students, but in the reality, teachers do not teach writing. Teachers should have taught writing to the students, especially writing a descriptive paragraph because it is included in the curriculum of 2012.

Teaching writing a descriptive paragraph is not as easy as it seems. There are two problems found in grade 7. First is that students of grade 7 are lack of vocabulary, which is needed in writing a descriptive paragraph, and second is that students do not know how to arrange that vocabulary into sentences. Based on those problems, teachers need some new methods or techniques to increase the students' ability in writing a descriptive paragraph.

This article proposes Neuro-Linguistic Programming to be a new technique in teaching descriptive writing and to help students writing a descriptive text. As stated by Collingwood (2001) that Neuro-Linguistics Programming (NLP) is a technique which explores the relationship between how we think (neuro), how we communicate verbally and non-verbally (linguistic), and our patterns of behavior and emotion (program). By using this technique, students can elaborate and develop their ability in writing a descriptive paragraph. It is hoped that this technique can help junior high school students in writing a descriptive paragraph by developing vocabulary.

As Levy and Sarah (1996) state that writing is an act of creative processes to construct a blank page to be a coherent structure by expressing the feelings, emotions, attitudes, prejudices, values and the full range of human experiences, Orwig (1999) says that writing is a productive skill in written mode. From the two statements above, it can be concluded that writing is a productive and creative skill to construct a blank page to be a coherent structure by expressing feelings, emotion, attitudes, prejudices, values and the full range of human experiences that is delivered in written mode. Writing itself is a very complicated activity and usually assumed as the most difficult skill among four basic skills, because when people do writing, correct grammar and structures are needed and people should know how to develop ideas and arrange them into a good writing. Even for native speakers, writing is a hard task to do, since it involves not just a graphic representation of speech, but also the development and presentation of thought in a structural way.

Moreover, in writing, there are several phase that has to be done. They are:
1. Pre-writing. Prewriting is the phase where brainstorming and idea development occurs. This phase is also the stage of structuring the idea, so the writing will not be overwhelmed by unnecessary explanation.

2. Drafting. Drafting is the phase of making short sentences, based on the ideas and the brainstorming, that are going to be put in the writing. Drafting is important for narrowing the writing. Therefore, the writing will always stick to the topic

3. Writing. Writing is the phase of expanding the draft into a complete text. In this phase, the first copy of the text is written.

4. Revising and Editing. This is the phase of correction. Any necessary change will be done in this section. It includes the problems like grammar correction, too many repeated words, and diction.

5. Final copy. This is the last step when the final copy of the paragraph is produced.

In addition, Nunan (2003) defines writing is inventing ideas trough mental works, thinking about how to express words and organizing them into statements and paragraphs for a clearer mental image to the reader. Therefore, related to the definition above, writing is a media of expressing ideas, opinions, perceptions, also feelings. It involves the activity of organizing and thinking through the process of mental work.

According to Boardman and Frydenberg (2007), the generic structures of descriptive text are identification and description. Identification functions to identify the objects of description. For example, identification can be the name of a person, the name of a thing or a place. Identification makes readers know who or what is it to be described. Description contains several detailed descriptions of the object. If the writer wants to describe a person, the description might be about the physical appearance, general appearance like clothes, shoes, and everything that is worn by a person. Then, it might be the characteristics of a person, like how kind is the person, what about his/her attitude, and so on. There are some of significant lexico-grammatical features of descriptive text. They are focus on specific participants, use of attributive and identifying processes, use of being/having verbs, use of adjectives, frequent use of epithets and classifiers in nominal groups and the use of simple present tense.

B. Discussion

1. Neuro-Linguistic Programming

There are several opinions about the definition of Neuro-Linguistic programming (NLP). Collingwood, an NLP Trainer Assessor (2001) states Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) explores the relationship between how we think (neuro), how we communicate both verbally and non-verbally (linguistic) and our patterns of behavior and emotion (program). It is both an epistemology, in that it studies how we know what we know and a methodology for creating practical descriptions of how do people function as human beings.

According to Revell and Norman (1997), Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) is a collection of techniques, patterns, and strategies for

assisting effective communication, personal growth and change, and learning. It is based on a series of underlying assumptions about how the mind works and how people act and interact. It means that Neuro-Linguistic programming combines how the mind works with the collection of techniques, patterns and strategies to get the effective communication.

2. Applying Neuro-Linguistic Programming
a. Pre-Teaching

In the class, this stage is usually characterized by activities such as, activating schemata, brainstorming and so on. This stage of teaching actually holds the most important of all stages that come later. Firstly, when teacher makes a good impression (or apply a good technique) at the pre-teaching stage, teacher may have established a relation with the students which can determine how the course runs. Secondly, pre-teaching also builds mood for the upcoming stages to run well. By building a good mood among the students, teacher will be able to simplify the complex road ahead.

b. Whilst Teaching

In this stage, teacher will present an example or two of simple descriptive paragraphs. Teacher will explain about the generic structure of descriptive text, like what should be put in a descriptive paragraph. For example, there are two structures of descriptive text. First is identification. It identifies the objects that will be described. And the second is description. It contains the characteristics of the object described. After explaining about the generic structure of descriptive text, teacher will tell the students the social function of the text. The social function of descriptive text is to describe a particular person, place or thing.

Students are served several description texts (see appendix). From the texts, students are asked about some descriptive vocabularies and its meanings. This activity means to measure how far students know about the vocabularies given before. Teacher also should ask the students whether they understand the texts or not by giving several comprehensive questions. In this session, teacher will ask the students which is the identification and which is the description of the paragraphs.

According to Revel and Norman (1997), Neuro-Linguistic Programming can be applied to the teaching of all aspects of language. For joint construction, the procedure will run as what have been adopted from Revel and Norman (2001). Here are the procedures:

1. Students are told that they are going on an inner experience seeing the great place they have ever visited.
2. Check that they understand vocabulary of the experience (beautiful, so many reliefs, etc.).

3.   Students are asked to relax, close their eyes, and "go inside." Once "inside," they listened to the teacher-produced fantasy.

4.   "Imagine a beautiful place that you have visited. The place that you really adore. Go inside the building, and look around on it. Catch the sense in describing that building. Take a look on every single corner of the building or place. Notice how you feel now. Think of the words to describe how you are feeling now. Take a deep breath and gently back to the room, bringing the feeling with you. Open your eyes."

5.   Ask the students to describe what they feel about the place or the building that they see several minutes ago. Listen to every statement they experience before. Ask them to write down their experience in a piece of paper.

Those are the procedure to describe a place. For junior high school students, teacher will change the object, for example the students are asked to imagine their mothers and the teacher will ask them to describe their mothers in a piece of paper. Teacher helps students to construct sentences and giving unknown vocabularies.

Teacher gives students several topics in an assignment. Students will be asked to write a descriptive paragraph depends on the topic that they have chosen. For example the topics are: "describe about your favorite actress or actors", "describe about your lovely pets", or "describe about a boy or a girl that you like the most right now."

c. Post-Teaching

After students collect their writing, teacher assesses the writing. There are grammatical features that should be assessing in the writing, Focus on specific participants, use of attributive and identifying processes, and use of simple present tense. At the end of the class, teacher summarizes the lesson and asks the students about what they have learned and sometimes teacher gives students homework about writing a simple descriptive text to be done and collect it on the next meeting.

C. The Advantages of Using Neuro-Linguistic Programming

There are several advantages that can be obtained by using Neuro-Linguistic Programming in teaching descriptive writing. The first is that using Neuro-Linguistic Programming involves all of the students, so the class will not be bored. The students will be active in class based on the approach that is said (student-centered). The second is that using Neuro-Linguistic Programming can be flexible in determining the topic. If the students doing are not working, teacher may do something else like changing the topic or ask the students about thing they like the most. The third is that students will be able to memorize vocabulary from the procedure given because Neuro-Linguistic Programming runs based on the students' experience which is easy to be remembered.

D. Suggestion

Neuro-Linguistic Programming can be used in many fields especially in education. It is suggested to the teacher to apply Neuro-Linguistic programming to help students in writing a descriptive text in the class by developing the vocabularies. When this technique is applied, teacher should manage the class to be quiet. It is also suggested that the teacher has enough preparation before applying this technique and mind about managing the time.

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