

USING SENTENCE RACE GAME IN TEACHING WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT TO JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstrak

Paper ini membahas tehnik kegiatan pengajaran menulis *descriptive text* untuk siswa SMP di dalam kelas dengan game *Sentence Race*. Game ini berguna untuk mereview dan merevisi kosa kata serta tata kalimat. Dalam kegiatan ini, siswa di dalam kelas di bagi menjadi dua kelompok. Setiap anggota kelompok mempunyai sebuah kartu kosa kata yang disediakan oleh guru. Guru menyediakan kartu yang berisikan kosa kata yang sama pada kedua kelompok. Ketika guru menyebutkan salah satu kosa kata, maka anggota kelompok yang memiliki kartu kosa kata tersebut maju kedepan kelas dan menuliskan dengan berpacu kalimat di papan tulis dengan menggunakan kosa kata yang ada di dalam kartu tersebut. Anggota kelompok yang menuliskan kalimat dengan benar dan cepat akan mendapatkan nilai. Setiap anggota kelompok mendapatkan kesempatan untuk menuliskan kalimat kedepan kelas. Bagi kelompok yang mendapatkan nilai tertinggi akan menjadi pemenang.

Key words: Sentence Race game, teaching English, vocabulary, Junior High School.

A. Introduction

Writing is one of skills that have to be learned by Junior High School students in Indonesia and it is one of English skills. In general, English has four skills, those are listening, speaking, reading and writing; and three elements, and those are grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Then, those skills and elements have to be taught in teaching English. In this paper, writer focuses in writing descriptive text to Junior High School students.

In teaching Writing, teacher uses *KTSP 2006* as reference. Teacher uses the appropriate activities that are used in class so that the teaching and learning process run well. Unfortunately, what is expected is different from what is gotten in the real situation. Although English has been taught for many years, we find

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many Junior High School students are still difficult to use English especially in written forms. It is proved by the miss spelling, ungrammatical sentence and the inappropriate punctuation that occur in students' writing.

By using game as one of activities in writing process, it is hoped that students can understand their mistakes in writing well. We know that game is an attractive way and most of students love in playing it. In this paper, writer uses *Sentence Race Game* that can be used in revising process of writing. This game is appropriate to Junior High School students because it is sentence game and most of Junior High School students are able to write simple sentences. In playing the game, students can write their writing in front of the class after that teacher revises their writing. By using this game, students can know their mistakes because teacher explains it directly in after students write their writing.

This game is also useful in reviewing or revising vocabularies and sentence structures. The teacher can use this game in any kind of texts. As we known that English has transactional or interpersonal texts, functional text and monolog texts. Because of the writer has to limit the problem in this paper, so she only uses a monolog text that is descriptive text. The writer intention is because in *KTSP 2006*, junior high school students have to learn this text. Besides they will learn this text in first grade junior high school, they will learn this text again in the first grade senior high school.

The writer intention of use sentence race game because game can make students happy and spirit in learning English, especially Junior High School students. It is supported by Schultz and Fisher in Yasrita (2007). They explain that game has gained a new importance in the English teaching world today and create useful context and employ meaningful language because games can reduce stress as one problem faced by student in the past. It is also a good way in review and practice English.

There are some differences about teaching a foreign language to children and teaching adults or adolescents. Cameron (2001) in his book, explains that children are often more enthusiastic and lively as learners. They love to pleasure the teacher than their peer group. They will do directly an activity even they do not understand why and how. However, they also lose interest more quickly and are less able to keep themselves motivated on tasks they find difficult. Children do not find it as easy to use language to talk about language; in other words, they do not have the same access as older learners to meta-language that teacher can use to explain about grammar or discourse.

In teaching English to junior high school students, the teacher have to aware that they are beginner, so they need to learn the basic rules of English. This includes being able to identify and write letters, words, and simple sentences, as well as learning to spell and punctuation. It is supported by Gebhard (2006: 212), he says that teachers teach beginners generally agree that beginning-level EFL/ESL need to learn the basic conventions of English.

Teacher has several roles in the class that are as controller, agency, prompters, assessors, resource and tutor. Those roles are explained by Harmer (2007: 25). He explains that a good teacher is able to act several numbers of different roles. He or she can be as controller who standing at front of the class,

commanding everything that happens and being the focus of attention. Here will be little chance for students to have an agency so that they can take much responsibility for their own learning, in the other words, the teacher as their agency of that. Harmer says that being a controller may work for grammar explanations and other information presentation, for instance, but it is less effective for activities where students are working together cooperatively on a project, for example.

Teacher as prompters is a role for teacher in some situations, for examples: encouraging students, pushing them to achieve more, feeding in a bit of information or language to help them proceed. At other times, we may need to act as feedback providers, it means helping students to evaluate their performance or creation. We also may be as assessors or telling students how well they have done or giving them grades, marks, scores, etc. We also need to be able to function as a resource for language information when students need to consult us and, at times as a language tutor that is an advisor who response to what the students are going and advises them on what to do next.

According to *curriculum (KTSP) 2006*, learning English at junior high school targeted so that learners can achieve the functional level to communicate orally and in writing to resolve everyday problems. The scope of the subjects in English in junior high school include: 1. ability discourse, namely the ability to understand and / or produce spoken text and / or writing skills are realized in four language, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing integrated to achieve the level of functional literacy; 2. ability to understand and create a variety of short functional text and monologue and essay form procedure, descriptive, recount, narrative, and report. Gradation of teaching materials to the use of vocabulary, grammar, and measures rhetoric; 3. supporting competencies, namely linguistic competence (using the grammar and vocabulary, sound system, Grammar), sociocultural competence (using expression and action are acceptable language in a variety of contexts communication), strategic competence (address issues that arise in the process communication in various ways in order to continue communication), and forming discourse competence (using the device forming discourse).

In addition, there are six orientations in teaching writing whereas each orientation is organized around a different focus as explained by Hyland (2003). They are: (1) *focus on language structures*; Pincas, in Kroll, (2003) mentions that the use of controlled composition consists of combining and substitution exercises that were designed to facilitate the learning of sentence structures by providing students with “no freedom to make mistakes.”, (2) *focus on text function*; Hyland (2003) tells this introduces the idea that particular language *forms* perform certain communicative *functions* and that students can be taught the functions most relevant to their needs. Functions are the *means* for achieving the ends (or purposes) of writing., (3) *focus on creative expression*; This can help generate self-awareness of the writer’s social position, and literate possibilities (Friere in Hyland, 2003) as well as facilitate “clear thinking, effective relating, and satisfying self-expression” (Moffett in Hyland, 2003)., (4) *focus on the writing process*; according to Richard and Amato (2003) there are involving three basic

components of an interactive process. One of them is that the writer brings to the process his or her own values, relationships, experiences, prior knowledge, culture, dreams, goals, and expectations., (5) *focus on content*; this orientation looks beyond subject content, composing process and textual forms those writing as attempts to communicate with writers. The central belief here is that we do not just *write*, we write *something* to achieve some *purposes*: it is a way of getting something done. Most simply, Martin in Hyland (2003) defines genre as a goal-oriented, staged social process. In this paper, those orientations were related to the concept of *Sentence Race Game*.

Sentence race game aims for reviewing or revising vocabularies and sentence structures. It is a good game for large classes whereas like mostly in Indonesia classes. J-B (2005) explains that the procedures of this game as following: First, teacher prepares a list of review vocabulary words. The vocabularies that will give to the students are the vocabulary that they have learned before. Teacher has to have the list vocabularies to make sure that the vocabularies are taught before. Second, teacher writes each word on two small pieces of paper. That means writing the word twice, once on each paper. Third, teacher organizes the pieces like bundles, two bundles, and two sets of same words. Fourth, teacher divides the class into two teams. Get them to make creative team names. For example, team STAR and team SUN. Fifth, teacher distributes each list of words to both teams and every student on each team should have a paper. It means that both teams have the same words. The last, when the teacher calls a word, so two students should stand up. One from each team. They must then run to the blackboard and race to write a sentence using their word.

The winner is the one with a correct and clearly written sentence. He also says that this game always played by children but it does not mean that it cannot be used by advance or adult. For adult learners, it needs more difficult words.

To sum up, this game is useful in reviewing or revising vocabularies and sentence structures. For junior high school students, the sentences can be simple ones. Students can use tenses that they have already learned such as simple present tense. In this paper, the writer focuses on the use of simple present tense in simple sentences of descriptive texts.

B. Discussion

a. Stages in the Writing Process

1. Prewriting

In this stage, students will choose the topic that they want to describe. Teacher tells students that they are going to study about descriptive text. Students will write sentences in simple present tense that describe about their favorite food, their favorite color, one of their family member, their favorite singer, their favorite actress or actor, or the best tourism object in their village.

Before coming to the core lesson, teachers should activate students' background knowledge by showing pictures, videos, or sounds that related to the topic that will be discussed. Since descriptive text is deal with particular people, place of thing, then teacher may provide some topics to the students. For examples, about their favorite food, their favorite color, one of their family

members, their favorite singer, their favorite actress or actor, or the best tourism objects in their village. Then, teacher chooses a topic and makes a simple sentence that describes that topic. Teacher does this as the model to the students. The conversation between teacher and students might be as follow;

Teacher: Well, student, do you know what picture it is?

(While showing a picture of meatball)

Students: Meatball, ma'am.

Teacher: GOOD! You are correct! Meatball is my favorite food.

Nissa. What is your favorite food?

Student: My favorite food is noodle, ma'am.

Teacher: Excellent! Why do you like noodle, Nissa? Ma'am likes meatball because it is tasty.

Student: I like noodle because it is also tasty ma'am.

(In this case, Nissa is only one who has good English.)

Teacher: OK! Thank you, Nissa.

Well, students. We will learn about descriptive text.

Before we came to the main course, in this meeting, you will learn how to describe a particular thing, person, or place. You will make simple sentences that describe about the topics that we have. Now, choose one of the topics.

Commonly, students' just keep silent when the teacher asks them without call her or his name. They seem reluctant to participate in the class whereas they are able to answer correctly the teacher questions. So, teacher has to be able to maintain the students' interesting of the lesson. It is allowed to appoint a smart student that we know well that she or he understand our question in activate students' background knowledge. She helps teacher to give an example to the other students. It aims to make clear the concept of the lesson to the students.

2. Drafting

In this stage, students write sentences that describe about the topic that they choose in prewriting. For examples of the students writing as follows:

Student A: My mother is beautiful woman. (My mother is a beautiful woman)

Student B: *My favorite food is spaghetti. (My **favorite** food is spaghetti.)*

Student C: *Zein Malik is handsome. (Zein Malik is **handsome**.)*

Student D: *Gita Gutawa has sweet voice. (Gita Gutawa **has** sweet voice.)*

Student E: *My sister loves cat. (My sister **loves cats**.)*

Student F: *Silokek is beautiful place in my hometown. (Silokek is **a beautiful** place in my hometown.)*

Student G: *I love pink colour. (I love pink **color**.)*

Student H: *My favorite pet is birds. (My favorite **pet** is birds.)*

Student I: *My father hobby is fishing. (My **father's hobby** is go fishing.)*

Student J: *My brother has big and round eye. (My brother has **big round** eyes.)*

Teacher evaluates the students' writing then she finds some mistakes in students' writing, especially the structure, spelling and punctuation. Teacher can use the words that incorrect spelling in Sentence Race Game later.

3. Revising

In this process, *sentence race game* is used. These are steps of the game:

- 1) Teacher prepares a list of review vocabulary words.
- 2) Write each word on two small pieces of paper. That means writing the word twice, once on each paper.
- 3) Organize the pieces like bundles, two bundles, and two sets of identical words.
- 4) Divide the class into two teams. Get them to make creative names.
- 5) Every student on each team should have a paper. Both teams have the same words.
- 6) When the teacher calls a word, two students should stand up, one from each team. The students must then run to the blackboard and race to write a sentence using their word.

The examples of students' sentences are table below:

Table 1:

No.	Words	Team STAR	Team SUN
1.	Favorite	<i>My favorite food is sate</i>	<i>My favorite food is fried rice.</i>
2.	Tasty	<i>It is tasty food.</i>	<i>It tasty Soto.</i>
3.	Round	<i>Ball is round.</i>	<i>My head round</i>
4.	Big	<i>My house is big.</i>	<i>I have big bag.</i>
5.	Small	<i>My friend small.</i>	<i>I have small nose.</i>

Scoring the students writing above with table below:

Table 2:

Team STAR					
No.	Fastest	Accuracy	Spelling	Punctuation	Final score
1.	0	4	4	3	11
2.	4	4	4	4	16
3.	0	4	4	4	12
4.	4	4	4	4	16
5.	0	3	4	4	11
Total					66

Table 3

Team SUN					
No.	Fastest	Accuracy	Spelling	Punctuation	Final score
1.	4	4	4	4	16
2.	0	3	4	4	10
3.	4	3	4	3	15
4.	0	3	4	4	11
5.	4	3	4	4	15
Total					67

The result of game is team SUN as the WINNER.

The assessing of the sentences as table follows:

Table 4

Aspects	Score			
	4	3	2	1
Using Punctuation	No errors in using stop, coma, etc.	Some errors in using stop, coma, and others punctuations but those did not change the meaning of sentence.	Some errors in using stop, coma and others punctuations. The meaning of the sentence is difficult for readers to understand.	Many errors in using stop, coma, and others punctuation. Thus, it cannot be understand by the readers.
Spelling	No errors in spelling	Some errors in spelling bur it does not change	Some errors in spelling but it is little bit hard for	Understand the meaning of writing.

		the meaning of sentence.	readers to understand the meaning of writing.	
Grammar	Using correct grammar and the meaning of sentence is clear.	Some mistakes in using grammar. The meaning of sentence is clear.	Some mistakes in using grammar. The meaning of sentences is not clear.	All of the sentence structures is incorrect and the meaning is not clear.

4. Editing

In this stage, teacher guides students to choose the correct sentences from their work and arrange them become a short descriptive paragraph. The form of the short descriptive paragraph as follows:

Teacher and students together arranges the correct sentences with the appropriate sentences with teacher's guiding. The result of students and teacher work as follows:

My Favorite Food

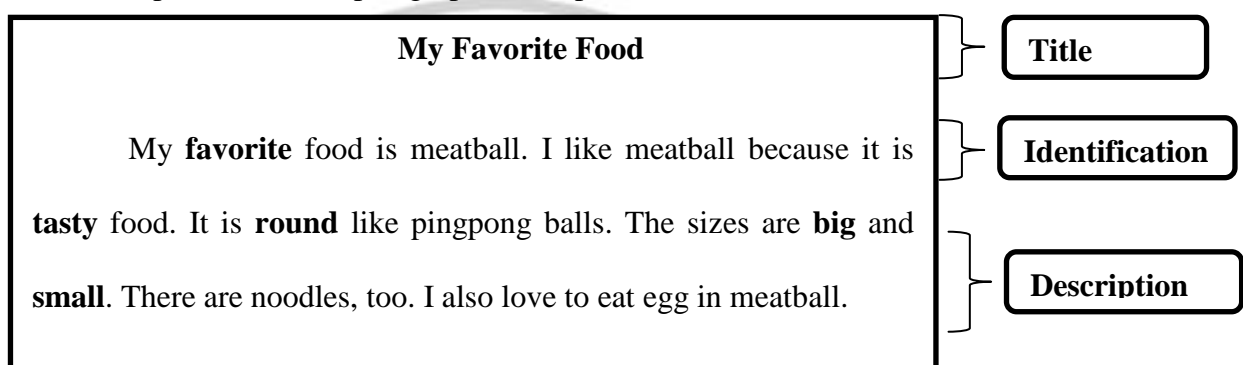
My favorite food is meatball. I like meatball because it is tasty food. It is round like pingpong balls. The sizes are big and small. There are noodles, too. I also love to eat egg in meatball.

After the short descriptive paragraph finish their make. Teacher explains the generic structures and linguistic features of the descriptive text by using their short paragraph above. Teacher adds the notes that identify the generic structures and adjectives verbs that occur in the short paragraph.

a. Publishing Students' Writing

This is the last stage in this process; students and teacher publish their works in a board provided in front of the class. In this occasion, students publish their correct sentences and the teacher publishes the short paragraph that class makes together in editing stage.

Example of the short paragraph that is published as follows:



5. Conclusion and Suggestion

According to the discussion, this paper can be concluded as follows:

1. This paper explains about a technique in teaching writing descriptive text to junior high school students.
2. This game is useful to review and revising vocabularies and sentence structures.
3. In this game, class is divided into two teams. Every team's member gets a vocabularies card that is provided by teacher.
4. When the teacher call a vocabulary, so two students stand up and write in race their sentences by using the vocabulary.
5. Team's member who write sentence correctly and the fastest gets more scores than the team's member who write incorrect sentences and lowest
6. Every team's member has opportunity to write their sentences.
7. The team that has the highest scores as the winner.

It is believed that the procedure in this paper is very limited. So, it is hoped other teacher try to develop better and more complete procedures in their class later on. The most important thing to remember is that the teacher has to realize that *sentence race game* has to be considered as the important activity to be used in English class. Then, English teacher should create interactive atmosphere in using *sentence race game*. These ways do not only help the students to improve their English. In addition, the teacher should choose interest vocabularies for students, because it can increase the students' interest and motivation to be

involved in teaching and learning process. Finally, teacher must give students' enough time to learn English which make students fall in love with their subject.

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