

USING IMAGERY STRATEGY IN TEACHING WRITING A DESCRIPTIVE TEXT TO JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstrak

Tujuan penulisan artikel ini adalah untuk membahas bagaimana pengajaran menulis teks deskriptif dengan menggunakan strategi *imagery*. Pelaksanaan pembelajaran menggunakan strategi *imagery* ini harus melalui dua tahapan utama. Pertama adalah tahap persiapan. Dalam tahap ini guru mempersiapkan segala materi dan topik yang sesuai dengan tingkat siswa kemudian mempersiapkan pertanyaan-pertanyaan untuk menuntun siswa mengembangkan ide-ide dalam menulis teks deskriptif. Tahap kedua adalah prosedur mengajar. Tahap ini terdiri dari tiga proses yaitu; *pre-teaching*, *whilst-teaching* dan *post-teaching*. Dalam *pre-teaching*, guru melakukan kegiatan *warming up* yang dapat mengaktifkan latar belakang pengetahuan siswa tentang teks deskriptif. *Whilst-teaching* dibagi menjadi tiga bagian: (1) eksplorasi; (2) elaborasi dan; (3) konfirmasi. Guru akan menggunakan strategi *imagery* pada bagian eksplorasi dan siswa disuruh mengaplikasikan strategi ini pada bagian elaborasi. Pada proses *post-teaching* guru menyimpulkan materi yang telah diajarkan dan menutup pelajaran.

Kata Kunci: *imagery*, teaching writing, descriptive text, Junior High School students.

A. Introduction

Writing is one of the skills in English that should be acquired by language learners besides listening, speaking, and reading. Through writing, the writer can express their feeling, ideas and thought to the reader in to written form. Thus, writing should be trained optimally to the students in teaching English. According to Kirszner and Mandell (2011:3), writing is not just something people do at school; writing is a life skill. It can be said that people can express their ideas in the paper, book, poems, letters, essay, novels or research report if they can write clearly. Thus, writing should be trained optimally to the students in teaching English. Moreover, among the four skills, writing seems to be difficult for the students because it deals with their ideas that must be well organized and presented in coherent sentences and paragraph. As Kirszne and Mandell (2011: 3)

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state that writing is a process which is included some steps that must be considered by the students as writers such as planning, organizing, drafting, revising, and editing, in order to make their writing product can be understood by the readers.

One of the objectives in teaching writing at junior high school is that students are demanded to produce the language into written form. Based on Curriculum 2006, students are demanded to write texts which are proper to their level. There are some texts that are taught to junior high school students, they are narrative, descriptive, recount, procedure, and report. The students must be able to understand and produce all kinds of the monolog texts. For example, in the first grade, students learn about descriptive text, so the students must be able to produce descriptive text into written form by their own words by considering the aspects of writing in order to create a good paragraph cohesively and coherently.

Descriptive text is a kind of monolog text that describes the characteristics of object with clear details to help readers visualize an object is being described. Ghaith (2002) says that descriptive writing portrays people, places, things, moments and theories with enough vivid detail to help the writer create a mental picture of what is being written about. Just like other text types, descriptive text has generic structure and language feature as well. According to Gerrot and Wignell (1994) descriptive text has identification and description as generic structure. In identification writer introduces person, place or thing as object of the text. Writer will introduce it in general in order reader will understand what writer is going to talking about. In description, writer describes the thing that has been chosen in identification specifically. It can be started from its physical appearances, characteristics until qualities.

Based on the writer's experience when she did teaching practice at Junior High School, only very few of the students were able to write a descriptive text well. Most of them had problems in writing a descriptive text. They did not fulfill the characteristics of the object that would be described. It because the students do not have idea in their mind so, they do not know what to write. In addition, they also have low motivation in writing because they are not interested in it.

Besides, the teacher also finds the difficulty in teaching writing descriptive text. The strategy that is used by the teacher does not overcome the students' problems in writing descriptive text. The teacher did not give examples or good models of writing a descriptive text to the students. These problems contribute to the students' low motivation to learn writing a descriptive text well. On the other hand, teacher focused on the teacher (teacher's centre).

To overcome the problems, a teacher should provide the students with interesting strategy to improve their skill in writing, in order to minimize students' difficulties. One of the strategies that can be used by the teacher in teaching writing a descriptive text is imagery strategy. This strategy is used in the class to stimulate students' mind to develop idea and students' creativity in writing descriptive text. Chamot (1999) finds that using organizational planning, imagery, and check goals are good strategies to develop writing. The picture would lead the students to real lives. It means that the students are easy to explore the idea in writing.

Moreover, Oxford (1990:61) says that a good way to remove what has been heard or read in the new language is to create the description outside and inside of it. By imaging what have been heard it will be easy to understand the new language. It will help the students to write a text because they know what they want to write. There are some pictures in their mind about what they will write.

Furthermore, Tennessee (2000) states that imagery is an activity which leads learners through the process of adding detail to sentence starters to create mental images of what they are writing. This activity will help to improve writing assignments regardless of the subject matter by drawing on the experiences of the learners and using these experiences to vary and expand the vocabulary they use in writing. Learners will visualize what they are writing about in order to expand their use of a wider vocabulary and improve written communication.

B. The Implementation of Using Imagery Strategy in Teaching Writing a Descriptive Text

1. Preparation

The teacher needs to organize the preparation well. It determines the successful of teaching and learning process. There are some preparations should be done by the teacher before entering the classroom. First, the teacher needs to formulate lesson plan. The lesson plan is useful for the teacher as a guide in teaching in the classroom in order to make the writing class runs well and systematically.

Second is about the materials, teacher should choose an interesting and familiar topic that close and appropriate for students at Junior High School. By choosing an interesting and topic, it is expected that students will be more interested or attracted. Good materials will make the teaching and learning process run well based on the requirements of the curriculum, syllabus and the objectives of the lesson.

Third is related to the media in teaching learning process. The media can be used to support teaching and learning process. It will help teacher to activate students' background knowledge, increase students' attention and motivation to the lesson. Therefore, the teacher should be careful in choosing the media. In using imagery strategy in teaching writing a descriptive text the teacher should prepare laptop and some pictures. Teacher uses laptop and in focus in order to show pictures or video to the students. Besides material, teacher also uses some tools such as worksheet, color marker and etc.

2. Teaching Procedures

KTSP 2006 requires the teachers to teach the students through some steps because it will help students to write. The steps are pre teaching, whilst teaching and post teaching. By doing these steps the students will be guided to write a good writing.

a. Pre-Teaching

This is a kind of warming-up activity. In pre-teaching, teacher has to stimulate students' background knowledge by introducing the topic, brainstorming idea,

selecting and rejecting ideas and so on. Since writing is difficult, the teacher should offer helpful feedback and suggestion. It leads students to the idea what they will write. According to Villanueva de Debat (2006:11), activating background knowledge of the students is really important to be done by the teacher. This activity will help the students to comprehend the lesson that will be taught. Besides, it will motivate the students to pay close attention to lesson because they are interested in what the teacher gives.

It is supported by Reiss (2012:56) says that “activating background knowledge not only makes learning easier, it also makes learning meaningful, awakens interest in the topic, and increases motivation”. Based on that point of view, it can be said that the thing that the teacher should do to start the lesson is to activate background knowledge of the students because it can encourage students’ motivation in teaching-learning process. In this strategy, the teacher does brainstorming activity to stimulate students’ background knowledge about descriptive text by giving picture and several questions related to the picture.

b. Whilst- Teaching

In this activity, the students are taught about writing a descriptive text and trained the skill that has been learned. Moreover, the students are guided to participate in discussing the lesson. The teacher lets the students to think creatively. Whilst- teaching is divided in to three stages, they are;

(1) Exploration

Exploration (look for information) models how to write based on the strategy introduced. The purpose of this step is to guide the students in writing activity. In exploration, teacher gives modeling a good writing to the students. Yan (2005:20) states that in teaching writing it is better for the teacher to give a model for writing and directly train students about writing strategies. If teacher demonstrates how prewriting activities, the schemata and outline strategies, students will be more successful in writing composition.

After building students’ background knowledge in pre-teaching, teacher explains about descriptive text to the students. Teacher then introduces imagery strategy in writing a descriptive text to the students. This strategy lets the students to create a mental picture or create ideas in their mind to produce the text that is descriptive text. The teacher first gives the picture of an object to the students and asks several questions. The questions lead the students to come up the ideas in their mind. If the ideas have come up in their mind, it will be easy for them to produce the text.

By answering the questions, the students have produced a text but the text is not good yet. The sentences in each number of the questions can combine to be the text. The teacher then fixes it in to a good paragraph. The teacher fixes the generic structure, language features, writing aspects like structures, conjunction, etc. The text that has been fixed by the teacher is a model for the students to make descriptive text.

(2) Elaboration

In this step, after the students have a model of a simple descriptive text in exploration, the teacher explains the social function, the generic structure and the language features of descriptive text. The explanations above are written on the

text by using color marker. In elaboration, the students are asked to practice. They are asked to write a descriptive text in pairs by applying imagery strategy for the characteristics of the object. They can make the identification based on their creativity. They may decide the name, nick name or birthday of the object. Then they use their imagery to write the description of the object that they describe. This description actually has been made before in exploration, in this step the students just rewrite them in to a good text in correct structure and other writing aspects. It means that in this step the students do editing and revising process as a part of writing process.

(3) confirmation

In confirmation, teacher gives feedback to the students' writing. The teacher check students' work such as structure, generic structure, language feature and other writing aspects. According to Yan (2005:20) it is crucial for teachers to offer positive and constructive advice on what students have written. From this process it hopes that the students will be able to write a good text. After checking the students' work the teacher gives a brief explanation about the mistake that generally make by the students. The teacher then concludes the lesson and gives assignment to the students.

c. *Post- Teaching*

This is the last activity in the teaching learning process to close the class. There are some activities that the teacher does: the teacher asks the students' difficulties about the lesson then together find the way to solve the difficulties. The teacher and the students conclude the lesson together, even though the teacher has concluded it before to make sure the students participate in the lesson.

Next, the teacher gives individual assignment to the students as homework. The topic is about their favorite person. It can be their father, mother, sister, brother (family members) or it can be their favorite artist, friend or teacher. The teacher also gives questions sheet to guide the students in doing their writing. The teacher announces that homework will be collected on the next meeting. Finally, the teacher closes the class.

Advantages and Disadvantages

There some advantages disadvantages of using imagery strategy in teaching writing a descriptive text. The advantages are: (1) This strategy can attract students' attention in teaching learning process because they are facilitated to create a mental picture in their mind about the topic that will be discussed; (2) By giving picture and guide, students will be more motivated in writing; (3) Students will be easy to find the idea about what they will describe because they have created mental image in their mind; (4) Students can describe more detail about the object. They do not only describe the physical appearance of the object but they can describe other details because it has been created in their mind. Students will be more confident to create their writing and collect it as a assignment.

However, this strategy also has disadvantages. The topic that is given by the teacher should be appropriate and interest to the students. If the topic does not interest to the students, they are exactly hard to write because they do not have idea in their mind so they do not know what to write. Besides, the teachers have to

prepare guide questions to lead students in building mental image or imagery for each topic. Due to it does not provide in the students book.

To overcome the disadvantages, the teachers have to be up date about the trending topics for junior high school students. The teachers can find the topics that are appropriate with the students in the internet, teenager magazine or even in the television. By searching in the internet, reading the magazine or watching television, the teachers can be inspired to give the topics to the students so that they will be interested in learning. If the teacher has known about the topics physically and mentally the teacher will also be easier to create a guide questions for the students. However, the teacher has to be aware the requirements in creating guiding questions in building students' imagery for teaching writing descriptive text. She has to make a list of main idea and supporting idea to create a good paragraph. It means that the number of the questions have to be arrange to guide the students produce a good paragraph.

To emphasize, the use of imagery strategy in teaching writing descriptive text has more advantages than disadvantages. Furthermore, the disadvantages of imagery strategy can be overcome. Therefore, there are strong reasons to use imagery strategy in classroom to teach writing a descriptive text.

C. Conclusion and Suggestion

Imagery strategy is a strategy in encouraging students' ability in writing especially in writing a descriptive text. By using imagery strategy, teacher can create an activity that motivates students to write. Besides, the students will easily develop their idea into good paragraphs and correct generic structure. Imagery strategy leads students to produce a creative writing especially in descriptive text. The core advantage of this strategy is that the students easily gather the idea in their mind so that it makes them easy to write.

Teaching writing descriptive in the classroom by using imagery strategy is done through three stages. They are pre-teaching, whilst-teaching, and post-teaching. In pre-teaching, the teacher prepares students to get involved in learning process. In this stage teacher builds students' prior knowledge about the lesson that is going to be taught. In whilst-teaching, there are three steps that should be done; they are exploration, elaboration and confirmation. In this stage, the teacher introduces imagery strategy as a strategy in writing a descriptive text and the teacher explains the descriptive text. The students then are given a picture after that they create image in their mind physically and mentally about the picture. They have to gather information in their mind about that picture. The teacher then guides the students in creating mental picture by giving several questions then fixes it. Finally, in post-teaching, before the teacher closes the class, he/she solves the difficulties that are faced by the students. Teacher then guides students to conclude the lesson and give assignment to the students.

Based on the advantages of imagery strategy in teaching writing a descriptive text, teachers are suggested several things, they are: (1) the teachers at junior high school are suggested to use imagery strategy in teaching writing a descriptive text because it can attract students' attention. Moreover, it is suggested

to give more than one picture in the beginning lesson; (2) the teachers are suggested to use imagery strategy in teaching writing a descriptive text in two meeting in order the students have practice more to write. It makes them being adapted to develop the idea in writing; (3) it is suggested to the teachers to prepare some sentences starter for the students in describing the object. The students then add the details of the sentence so, they can add more detail about the object. Their writing will be more creative; (4) the teachers are suggested to conduct action research or other related researches to study the effectiveness of imagery strategy in teaching writing a descriptive text.

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