

TEACHING WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT BY USING CROSSWORD PUZZLE FOR SECOND GRADE OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstrak

Tujuan penulisan artikel ini adalah untuk membahas bagaimana pengajaran menulis teks deskriptif dengan menggunakan media teka-teki silang. Teeka-teki silang ini dapat digunakan sebagai media alternatif dalam mengajar menulis teks deskriptif untuk siswa di kelas II SMP. Pelaksanaan pembelajaran menggunakan teeka-teki silang dalam menulis teks deskriptif melalui dua tahapan utama. Pertama adalah tahap persiapan. Dalam tahap ini, guru mempersiapkan teeka-teki tertentu yang akan digunakan dalam mengajar menulis teks deskriptif. Tahap kedua adalah tahapan pengajaran. Tahap ini terdiri dari *pre-teaching*, *whilst-teaching* dan *post-teaching*. Dalam *pre-teaching*, guru melakukan kegiatan *Brainstorming* yang dapat mengaktifkan latar belakang pengetahuan siswa tentang teks deskriptif. *Whilst teaching* dibagi menjadi tiga bagian: (1) eksplorasi, (2) elaborasi dan (3) konfirmasi. Guru menggunakan teeka-teki silang dan siswa akan memecahkan teeka-teki silang pada bagian elaborasi. Dengan menjawab pertanyaan-pertanyaan yang tersedia pada teeka-teki silang, para siswa secara otomatis akan mendapatkan kosa kata yang diperlukan dalam menulis teks deskriptif. Selain itu, siswa akan menulis teks deskriptif berdasarkan kosa kata pada teeka-teki silang. Manfaat utama dari penggunaan teeka-teki silang dalam mengajar menulis teks deskriptif adalah untuk memperkaya kosakata serta untuk meningkatkan minat siswa dalam menulis. Oleh karena itu, teeka-teki silang adalah media yang tepat dalam mengajar menulis teks deskriptif.

Key Words: teaching writing, descriptive text, crossword puzzle, Junior High School students

A. Introduction

Writing as a part of the language skills must be taught optimally by the teacher to the students. Through writing the students can exchange their ideas, thoughts, and experiences. Moreover, to express their feeling, need, and desire in written form, the students need writing skills.

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Based on Curriculum 2013, current educational Curriculum in Indonesia, there are three genres of monolog text that have to be taught in teaching writing for second grade Junior High School students. These genres of text are descriptive, recount, and procedure text (Depdiknas, Indonesian Educational Department, 2013:70). Each genre of text has different function and features which may give difficulties to the students. This paper will only discuss about the issues in teaching descriptive text and the solution to overcome it.

Descriptive text is a kind of text that presents the characteristics of something in order to make clear impression of a person, place, object or event. Droga and Humphrey (2005:148) state that descriptive text has certain generic structure and language features. The generic structure of descriptive text consists of identification and description. On the other hand, the language features of descriptive text consist of three things. The first one is that descriptive text focuses on specific participant. The second one is that descriptive text uses simple present tense. The last one is that descriptive text uses adjective and adverb.

Based on the writer's experience as a trainee teacher at SMP N 2 Solok in 2012, many Junior High School students were not interested in writing descriptive text because it seems difficult for them. They found some problems in writing such as lack of vocabularies, low ability in grammar and spelling (Farooq, 2012:186), lack of motivation to study (Hyland, 2007:220), and difficulty in exploring ideas (Al-Khasawneh, 2010:3).

Beside the difficulties in students' side, the teacher also finds the difficulty in teaching descriptive text. The teacher's difficulty is in using appropriate media for teaching learning process. The media that are used by the teacher do not overcome all of the students' problems in writing descriptive text.

To overcome the problems above, the teacher needs to find and use appropriate media to help the students in teaching writing descriptive text. Media are the means for transmitting or delivering messages. In teaching-learning perspective, media are used to deliver content to the learners for achieving effective instruction (Naz, 2010:1). In this case, the use of media in teaching-learning process is needed to attract students' attention and to make teaching-learning activities more interesting and effective.

There are some researches which offer various media that can be used in writing. The first one is by using descriptive video to enhance writing. This medium is introduced by Helen Hoffner et al (2008). They state that "the descriptive video in teaching writing is developed to give visual image to students". By giving the visual image about a thing, the students will be able to write down a description of the scene they watched. By using descriptive video, the students get ideas about the object that will be described. Moreover, the use of video can also motivate students in writing. However, this medium has two weaknesses. Descriptive video can not overcome students' limited vocabularies and low ability in grammar and spelling problems.

The second research is improving students' ability in writing descriptive text by using picture. This medium is introduced by Sa'diyah (2011). According to her, the picture can increase students' interest and make writing activity more interesting. The picture also enhances the students' participation and interaction

during the learning activities. Same with the video descriptive, the using of picture in teaching writing descriptive text can overcome the students' lack of study motivation problems. However, the use of this medium can not overcome students' low ability in grammar and spelling and limited vocabularies problems.

The third research is that writing descriptive essays using tree diagram. This medium was first developed by Chien and Ching (2004) from the Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. Then, the medium was implemented by Nair et al (2012). Their research shows that the use of tree diagram increases students' motivation in writing descriptive text, improves students' grammar and writing score. The using of tree diagram can overcome the low ability in grammar and difficulties in exploring ideas problems. However, this medium can not overcome some writing problems such as lack of vocabularies and low ability in spelling.

Thus, the media such as descriptive video, picture and tree diagram may help the students in exploring their ideas and motivate them in writing; but these media can not help students to solve vocabulary problem. As a result, the teacher needs an alternative medium that can solve lack of vocabularies and spelling, lack of motivation to study, and difficulties in exploring ideas problems.

One of alternative media is crossword puzzle. According to Serna and Azor (2001), crossword puzzle is a well-known game that can be easily integrated in class. Claire (2010:6) defines the crossword puzzle as a word puzzle in a grid of black and white squares. The goal is to write one letter in each white square to make the words given by clues. By using crossword puzzle, the teacher will show the vocabularies that will be used in descriptive text. Crossword puzzle can help the students in writing descriptive text because it can solve students' problem in finding appropriate vocabularies.

Moreover, Serna and Azor (2011:2) also state that crossword puzzle that has been shown in learning activities has several advantages. First, in teaching vocabulary, crossword puzzle is used to introduce new vocabularies to students. Second, in teaching pronunciation, crossword puzzle is used to teach spelling of the words. Third, the teacher can create fun learning activity by using crossword puzzle. Fourth, crossword puzzle can stimulate students' mind and encourage logical thinking.

B. The Implementation of Teaching Writing Descriptive Text by Using Crossword Puzzle

1. Preparation

Teacher has to prepare everything that is related to the process of teaching learning before coming into classroom. The first preparation that has to be done by the teacher is to organize the suitable materials based on syllabus and a familiar topic that is interesting for students. The teacher needs to find lesson materials and examples of descriptive text.

The second preparation is to find appropriate media. The media that teacher needs are picture of object and crossword puzzle. The function of pictures is to explore students' knowledge about descriptive text. By showing the pictures, the students are asked to describe the characteristics of the object. Beside pictures

of object, the teacher needs a crossword puzzle that has a specific content. It means that the content in this crossword puzzle has to be related with descriptive text that will be written by the students. The crossword puzzle's content is about the characteristics or condition of things that will be described. From the content, the students will get vocabularies about the characteristics of an object. The characteristics of the object will be used in writing descriptive text. Accordingly, the teacher has to create her own crossword puzzle. In creating crossword puzzle, there are two requirements that have to be followed by the teacher. The first one is that the teacher has to decide the main and supporting vocabularies that will be used in puzzle. The second one is the teacher creates the form of crossword puzzle based on the list of vocabularies that have been created before. If one puzzle can not cover all those vocabularies, the teacher can create another crossword puzzle.

The last preparation is to formulate the lesson plan. The teacher prepares lesson plan as guidance in teaching learning process. By using lesson plan, the teacher will decide the steps that will be done in classroom activity. In formulating lesson plan, the teacher also determinates duration of each activity to manage the time of learning process effectively.

2. Teaching Procedures

Teaching procedures are divided into three parts. They are Pre-teaching, Whilst-teaching, and Post-teaching.

a. Pre-Teaching

In pre-teaching activity, the teacher does brainstorming activities that can activate students' background knowledge about descriptive text. The activities that will be done in this part are asking some questions about the class condition and giving brief explanation about descriptive text.

b. Whilst-Teaching

In whilst-teaching activity, the students are thought about writing and trained to use the skill that has been learned. Moreover, the students are guided to participate in discussing the topic. The teacher lets the students to think and act creatively. Whilst-teaching activity is divided into three parts:

1) Exploration Activity

In exploration activity, the teacher builds students' knowledge about descriptive text. At the first, the teacher shows a picture of person, animal or thing to the students. The teacher asks students to describe the picture orally by giving some questions. After discussing about the picture, the teacher explains about the concept of descriptive text. She explains about what the descriptive text is, social function, generic structure, and language features of descriptive text. Before coming to the next step, teacher gives the example of descriptive text to students.

2) Elaboration Activity

In this part, the teacher uses crossword puzzle as an alternative medium. Before showing crossword puzzle to students, the teacher shows a picture about a person that will be described in the crossword puzzle. After showing the picture, the teacher asks the students to find out the characteristics of that person. The next activity is that the teacher shows the big size of crossword puzzle about person in front of the class. The size of this big crossword puzzle is about 79 x 109 cm. The

teacher shows the big size of crossword puzzle in order all the students can look at it clearly in the discussion activity.

My Best Friend

Across	Down
1. Synonym of clever	1. Kind of hobby
2. Lens to protect eyes	5. Body size
3. Kind of eye color	7. Antonym of ugly
4. Kind of hair	8. Adverb; pretty appearance
5. Antonym of male	9. Kind of skin color
6. Synonym of beautiful	10. Age; little
	11. Height
	12. Antonym of sad

The teacher explains about the crossword puzzle and what students have to do. After explaining about the crossword puzzle, the teacher distributes the copies of crossword puzzle that will be filled by students. The students then fill in the blank grid of crossword puzzle. The crossword puzzle above has contents about things that will be described by students. The students have to fill the blank box by read the clues. From the clues that are shown, the students try to find the answers. After the students write the answer, then the teacher and students will discuss about the answer together.

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After discussing about the answers from this crossword puzzle, the teacher and the students discuss about the characteristic thing that will be described. The teacher guides the students to mention characteristics of things one by one. After the students mention the characteristics, the teacher writes these characteristics in white board.



Description about person

Characteristics are:

- ⇒ Appearances
 - She wears glasses
 - Eyes color —> brown
 - Hair —> straight
 - Skin color —> white
 - Age —> young
 - Body height —> tall
 - Body size —> fat
- ⇒ Characteristics
 - A woman
 - Sweet and pretty
 - Smart
 - Her hobby —> singing
 - She sings beautifully
- ⇒ Feelings
 - happy

3) Confirmation Activity

In confirmation activity the teacher asks students to write descriptive paragraph based on person's characteristics in crossword puzzle above. For identification part, the students create paragraph by their own creativities. They can decide the name of person they describe and use the characteristics from the crossword puzzle

c. Post-Teaching

After the students finish their description text, the teacher asks the difficulties which may be faced by the students. By asking their difficulties, the teacher will know about the students' problems in writing and the teacher can solve it for the next teaching learning activity. The teacher also asks about students' feeling in writing descriptive text by using crossword puzzle. In post-teaching activities, the teacher evaluates the descriptive text that is written by students. She can evaluate the students' writing based on writing's rubric. The last activity in post-teaching is concluding the teaching and learning process of the day. The teacher guides the students to conclude the definitions of descriptive text, social function, language feature and its generic structure.

3. Advantages and Disadvantages of Crossword Puzzle

There are three main advantages of using crossword puzzle in teaching writing descriptive text for Junior High School students. The first advantage is that crossword puzzle helps students to solve lack of vocabularies problem. By using crossword puzzle, the students will be introduced with new vocabularies that are related with descriptive text. The second advantage of crossword puzzle is that it helps teacher to encourage students' motivation to study. By answering the

puzzle, the students will find an interesting activity. This interesting learning activity of course can motivate the students in learning. Correspondingly, crossword puzzle also motivates students because it facilitates students in writing. The third advantage of crossword puzzle is that crossword puzzle can be a guideline that can develop students' ideas in describing a thing. By using the clues and vocabularies from crossword puzzle, students can get ideas to make description text. Moreover, by using crossword puzzle the students also get guidelines to write in right spelling. If students can solve the crossword well, they also can write in right spelling for specific vocabularies.

However, the use of crossword puzzle in teaching writing descriptive text may have disadvantages. Crossword puzzle that is used in teaching writing process may not be found in internet, book or other sources. The teacher has to create their own crossword puzzle. Another disadvantage of crossword puzzle is that not all the characteristics of things can be provided in crossword puzzle because in creating crossword puzzle the teacher has to adjust one word with other words. To overcome the first disadvantage, the teacher needs to search more information about the kinds of crossword puzzle in internet or puzzle books. The teacher can find another model of crossword puzzles. In addition, to overcome the second disadvantages, the teacher has to be aware the requirement in creating crossword puzzle. She has to make a list of main words and supporting words as contents in crossword puzzle.

C. Conclusion and Suggestion

D.

Crossword puzzle is an alternative medium in developing students' writing ability which is very useful and applicable to be used in writing descriptive text. Teaching writing descriptive in the classroom by using crossword puzzle is done through in three phases: pre-teaching, whilst-teaching and post-teaching. In pre-teaching activity, the teacher will do brainstorming activity to activate students' memory about descriptive text. The next process is whilst-teaching activity. In this step, the teacher will explain about descriptive text and the teacher will use crossword puzzle as a teach medium. In this step, the students also are asked to write descriptive text. The last step is post-teaching. In this step, teacher will do closing activity.

Considering the advantages of crossword puzzle in teaching writing descriptive text, English teachers are suggested to do several things:

1. The English teachers at Junior High School are suggested to use crossword puzzle as an alternative medium in teaching writing descriptive text. Moreover, they are suggested to use crossword puzzle for more than one meeting.
2. The English teachers are suggested to involve their students in creating crossword puzzle. It means that the students have to be proactive in learning process.
3. Before studying descriptive text, the English teachers are suggested to discuss with the students about the things that they want to describe for

the next meeting. The students can choose which object that they are interested in.

4. The English teachers are suggested to give homework for their students. The teacher can give other kinds of puzzle that have to be solved by students at home. By doing the puzzle, the students can write other descriptive texts.
5. The teachers are suggested to conduct action research or other related researches to study the effectiveness of crossword puzzle in teaching writing descriptive text.

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