TEACHING WRITING A NARRATIVE TEXT BY USING COMIC CREATOR (*BITSTRIPS*) AS A MEDIUM TO SECOND GRADE STUDENTS OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Fakhrun Nisa[1], Muhd. Al-Hafizh[2]
English Department
Faculty of Languages and Arts
State University of Padang
e-mail: f_nisa07@rocketmail.com

Abstrak

Pengajaran menulis *narrative text* untuk siswa menengah pertama bukanlah hal yang mudah karena siswa sering kali mengalami kesulitan dalam mengekspresikan ide dan kurangnya motivasi untuk meningkatkan kemampuan dalam keterampilan menulis. *Comic creator* adalah salah satu aplikasi *website* yang dapat meningkatkan motivasi siswa dalam pengajaran menulis narrative teks. Pada aplikasi ini siswa dapat membuat cerita sendiri karena *comic creator* telah menyediakan karakter-karakter, latar-latar, tulisan-tulisan, dan sebagainya untuk mempermudah siswa dalam membuat dan merancang cerita yang mereka inginkan. Langkah-langkah dalam pengajaran menulis dengan *comic creator* yaitu *preparation, pre-teaching, whilst-teaching* dan *post-teaching*. Pada *preparation* guru mempersiapkan materi, media ajar dan rancangan pelaksanaan pembelajaran yang akan digunakan. Pada *pre-teaching* guru mengaktifkan latar belakang pengetahuan murid dengan memperlihatkan video atau gambar yang sesuai dengan materi yang akan diajarkan. Pada *whilst-teaching* guru menerangkan lebih lanjut tentang narrative teks dan bagaimana langkah-langkah dalam menulis cerita yang baik melalui *comic creator* pada situs *Bitstrips* tersebut. Pada *post-teaching* guru menyimpulkan pelajaran dan memberikan tugas kepada siswa untuk memantapkan materi pembelajaran.

Kata kunci: *Narrative text*, *Comic creator*, *Bitstrips*.

A. INTRODUCTION

Based on the 2013 curriculum in Indonesia of junior high school which recommended by the government, there are five texts which have to be mastered by the students such as descriptive text, procedure text, report text, recount text, and narrative text. In those texts that have to be mastered by students, narrative text is one that has a purpose to entertain. Narrative text is synonymous with story. It has orientation, complication and resolution. The focus is on characters that have

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problems, adventures or experiences and will end with the resolving of the problems. This type of text engages the readers to an imaginative experience. Therefore the writers should be able to interest the readers with their writing.

Students may have difficulties and they may be confused what to write their idea. One of difficulty to write narrative text is students have lack vocabulary. Schumm (2006) mentions that narratives typically use everyday vocabularies. In addition, vocabulary plays a very important role in constructing a good paragraph. By choosing appropriate words, the writer will be able to communicate their ideas, opinions, even disagreement smoothly. Another difficulty that will be faced by students is writing about the main conflict (complication) of the story which is the most dominant part in narrative text. Complication is made up of a series of events that present a problem or conflict that needs to be solved. The problem, often in the form of an obstacle that needs to be overcome, introduces tension or excitement into the story. The complication needs a response from the main character in the story that leads to the resolution. It is difficult for them to write the proper main conflict of the story that will leads to the resolution.

The comic creator (*Bitstrips*) is one way that can be used by the teacher in writing activities, especially in making narrative text in the junior high school classroom. Comic creator is a media to make a comic. Comics are essentially composed of sequential images or pictures usually accompanied by narrative text. Comic can motive students in learning English. Comics can capture and maintain the learner's interest (Yang, 2003). According to Vercasi (2001) analytical and critical thinking skills can be developed through comics.

There are several definitions of writing. Winterrowd and Murphy (1985) say that *writing* is the stage of transforming idea into words on paper, and as someone writes he/she may discover new ideas to express his thought. When doing writing, writers might add or change their ideas to properly deliver their thought.

Brown (2001) says that because *writing* is a constructing process and needs to redo the concept of writing, teacher has to lead the students into the proper stage in processing the writing. All of these steps of writing process will lead the writer in order to get a good production of writing.

Gerrot and Wignell (1994) say *narrative* is a story that shares problematic events that will come to the plot and ended with resolution. Narrative entertains the audience by showing problems that at the end of the story will be solve or remain unsolved. Moreover, Anderson (1997) also says that *narrative* is a story in a text that entertains and informs the audience.

Anderson (1997) states that a good narrative has to make the reader or listener can imagine: what characters look like, where the action is taking place and how things are happening. Narrative has to make the audience pictures clearly about the story. Not only picture the story but a good narrative has to bring audience involve emotionally to the story. If a story success to make the audience involve to the story, that narrative can be considered as a good narrative.

Bitstrips is a very popular comic builder app that people are using to create funny cartoons of them and tell stories about their lives through personalized web comics. Comic creator in this site gives the ability to add and remove frames from comics and allows authors to setup their pages according to their needs. Authors can resize and move frames along the page in order to support many of the techniques used in comics directing and materialize their stories. Comic creator also imports well known picture formats for frames background and clip arts (the second can also be resized and flipped horizontally or vertically). Dialogue balloons can be simply dragged and dropped on the page.

B. DISCUSSION

Before staring the teaching activities, teacher should prepare all things needed in classroom because preparation will give big impact in teaching and learning process. The teacher has to do following preparations such as material, media, and lesson plan.

The procedure of teaching and learning consists of three phases: pre-teaching activity, whilst-teaching activity, and post-teaching activity. The first phase is pre-teaching activity. In this stage, teacher activates the background knowledge of the students by showing videos or pictures about the material related to the lesson. From the videos or pictures, teacher leads a discussion about what they will do that day.

In whilst-teaching activity, there are five sections called Scientific Approach. They are observing, questioning, associating, experimenting and networking. Observing is the activity of the teacher to show the example of narrative text equipped with generic structure. The teacher asks students to read the text first, and tell the students that they should observe what they are going to read before showing the text. This is because they have to make some questions about what they have observed from the text given at the end of this step. After showing the text, the teacher guides the students to discuss about what the text tells about.

In questioning, the question should be better if teacher and student use oral questions posed during classroom recitations are more effective in fostering learning than are written questions. Then, the teacher together with the students discusses the questions and the teacher explains the purpose and moral value that they can get in narrative text. The teacher introduces story elements that develop the narrative text before teacher asks students to do exercises. They determine the characters, the plot, and the setting in that text. The characters and the setting that they get usually will be placed in the orientation like in the sample text, while the plot which has conflicts will be placed in the complication. In some ways, narrative text combines all the conflicts.

Associating is the activity when the teacher leads the students to write and arrange a paragraph together. Teacher divides students into group work. Teacher gives a narrative story with blank paragraph. So, teacher asks students' group work to make complication and resolution of the story. They can create the conflict in

pairs. Teacher tells the students that they can create and explore the story as imaginative as they want until they get the best conflicts that they want to develop and write. If the students finish creating their own story, teacher gives opportunity to students to read their own story. Here, teacher can see the students' comprehension about the lesson.

Fill the blank paragraph in pairs! You can create your own story.

THE LONELY LANDY

Long time ago, there was a porcupine named Landy. He was so lonely. No one wanted to play with him, because they afraid of his spikes. One day, Koko the frog held his birthday party. He invited all his friends, including Landy.

Orientation

In experimenting, teacher explains how to use comic creator (*Bitstrips*) to write a narrative text to motivate them to write a story. Teacher should have an account as a teacher in *Bitstrips* site, so the students can join the teacher's class to submit their assignment there. Teacher creates his/her own class for students in that site and adds students to classroom. In this teacher's site, teacher ready to assign activity to students. Students will then see this activity waiting for them when they are log in. Teacher has to use laptop and LCD to show the sample of using comic creator (*Bitstrips*) to students. Teacher asks students to write their own narrative text by using that media creatively. Experimenting is the activity of the students to produce a written text by themselves. Comic creator will develop their writing ability especially in making narrative story. Finally, the students will get more understanding about the concept of writing the text.

Networking is the activity when the students try to show their writing, the other students can give comments and the teacher gives the feedback about text that showed by the students. In this phase, students submit and share their activity to teacher's account.

Finally is post teaching activity, this activity is also known as the closing activity. Teacher should make this phase as memorable as possible in order to make students remember the day's lesson and wait for the next lesson. In this phase, teacher leads the students to summarize the material that has been taught by asking some questions to recall the students' memory. Teacher asks the students about the difficulties that they faced during the activity. Teacher concludes the lesson together with the students. In confirming the students' ability in writing narrative text, teacher may give the students a home work by asking the students to create a story by using comic creator in *Bitstrips* that have been explained by teacher to be developed into a narrative text.

There are several advantages of using Bitstrips itself. The first one is Bitstrips is free and registration is optional. You can log in with your Facebook account. Then, Students can create comics, their own characters, and dialogues using vocabulary they know. Bitstrips stimulates imagination and creativity because everything, from characters to complex backgrounds, is customizable. The last one is Bitstrips is embeddable on blogs and wikis.

However, the comic creator in *Bitstrips* site has few limitations. First, it cannot use if there is not internet access in the school. Second, it does not have grammar check. Therefore, students cannot check spelling and correct grammar automatically. Whereas grammar check is also required in digital writing. Third, the students must have many vocabularies to create the story. This medium can be used if the students have good comprehension about narrative text. The last one is that teacher's account has trial version for thirty days only, so that the teacher should pay the bill for make it longer.

C. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that there are many ways to teach writing to junior high school students. One of them is using comic creator. The comic creator is a kind of media that can be used to motivate students' writing skill while learning English. Using comic creator as a media in teaching writing skill will help the students to create narrative story creatively. The students will feel satisfied when they can reach the goal. This medium will be a reference of the students in doing writing later. The students also can improve their ability to produce a good writing. It creates a lively and enjoyable classroom that increases students' interest and motivation.

In order to be successful in teaching writing a narrative text to junior high school students, teacher is suggested to be able to create an interesting and effective way. In writing this paper, the writer expects the teacher to motivate the students in

writing process by using comic creator in *Bitstrips* site. It is suggested to the teacher to use this media for the students to initiate them to write more in this fun way.

Note: This article is written based on the the writer's paper under the supervision of her advisor, Muhd. Al Hafizh, S.S., M.A.

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