

THE USE OF THE *TELL ME WHAT YOU SEE* TECHNIQUE IN TEACHING WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan penggunaan tehnik *Tell Me What You See* dalam pembelajaran menulis teks deskriptif. Kemampuan siswa SMP dalam memahami teks deskriptif masih sangat kurang disebabkan karena penggunaan tehnik yang kurang menarik oleh guru dalam pengajaran. Dalam materi teks deskriptif ini siswa dituntut untuk dapat mendeskripsikan objek, tokoh, dan tempat yang ada di lingkungan sekitar melalui tulisan. Untuk menstimulus siswa dalam menulis dipilih teknik pengajaran *Tell Me What You See* yang merupakan pengembangan dari teknik belajar visual internal. Teknik *Tell Me What You See* yaitu konsep pembelajaran dengan mengoptimalkan penglihatan terhadap objek yang dilihatnya dan mengeksplorasi imajinasinya, kemudian dituangkan oleh siswa melalui kata-kata lewat keterampilan berbicara sebelum dituangkan ke dalam bentuk tulisan. Teknik ini sangat cocok digunakan dalam pembelajaran teks deskriptif yang menuntut siswa berbicara mendeskripsikan suatu objek lalu menuliskannya. Melalui pembelajaran keterampilan menulis dengan menggunakan teknik *Tell Me What You See* ini dapat dijadikan pilihan untuk guru dalam menciptakan pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris yang efektif, kreatif, dan menyenangkan.

Key words: writing, the *Tell Me What You See* technique, descriptive text

A. INTRODUCTION

English is one of subjects that must be learned in junior high school. English has four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Writing is one of those skills that must be mastered by English learners. However, nowadays, most of junior high school students are not interested in writing, because writing seems difficult for them. Writing is difficult because of some problems such as organizing ideas, vocabulary, spelling, cohesion, coherence of the essay or paragraph. Yan (2005:5) says that writing is an essential but difficult skill for EFL students to accomplish". In addition, Richard and Renandya (2002:303) also state that "writing is the most difficult skill

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for second language learners to master. The difficulty lies not only in generating and organizing ideas, but also in translating these ideas into readable text". So, writing needs specialized skill that includes the ability to express thoughts clearly and efficiently.

Lack of idea is the most actual problem which students often face in writing descriptive text. According to Murcia (1991: 233) "writing is the ability to express one's ideas in written form". If students are asked why they are lazy to write, the answer is lack of idea. They do not know what they will write. Furthermore, their teacher often asks directly to write descriptive text, for example about a favorite actor or actress. The students have to finish it only for several minutes. It can be imagined that how can they finish their writing if they are hard to find the idea.

Another problem that can be found in junior high school students is how teachers teach writing descriptive text in classroom. One of the techniques that often to be applied in descriptive text is giving a picture. It is a good way to give visualization for students. According to Clark and Lyons (2011) "visual images have proven to have several functions in teaching learning process; directing attention, awakening appropriate prior knowledge, managing mental loads, building mental models, transferring new skills, and optimizing motivation". Some teachers probably apply it, but it is quite boring for students. Also, the students cannot develop their idea to write because they only focus on a picture given by the teacher. Those are the problems that teachers face in teaching writing descriptive text.

Based on the background above, the teachers must choose an effective technique to teach writing descriptive text. According to Richard and Rogers in Brown (2000:31) "technique is any a wide variety of exercises, activities, or tasks used in the language classroom for realizing lesson objectives". To make an effectively class, the teachers have to apply a technique that is suitable in teaching learning process. Here, the writer would like to propose the *Tell Me What You See* technique as an alternative technique that can help the teachers teach descriptive text effectively.

According to Murcia (1991: 233) "writing is the ability to express one's ideas in written form". It means that writing is an activity to express our ideas in written form. From definitions above, it can be said that writing can be distinguished from other skills as the most difficult one. There are many factors influencing writing to be a good one such as grammatical, vocabularies, punctuation, and spelling knowledge which must be integrated to be a paragraph.

A good writer has to consider the idea which he or she gets to find the purpose of his or her writing. Harmer (2004:4) states that "writers have to think about three main issues; consider the purpose of their writing, think of the audience they are writing for, and decide to include the facts, ideas, or arguments". So, it is not easy to get all of them in writing.

Based on curriculum 2013, descriptive text is one of the texts that must be learned in junior high school especially for the first grade. The students have ability to produce oral and written descriptive text about person, animal, and object correctly and contextually.

Harmer (2007:112) says that writing can be defined as writing-for-learning and writing-for-writing. Writing-for-learning means writing as a tool to practice the language they have learned, and in writing-for-writing, it is a tool to develop the students' ability as writers. So people have their own purpose to write, they can learn to write by trying to write something and develop their writing ability.

Descriptive text is one of genres of text that must be learned in junior high school. It is hoped that students in junior high school will communicate each other in oral and written form of communication. According to Keraf (2000) mentions in descriptive writing, the writer transfers the images, the feeling that writer experienced to the reader. The writer tries to convey the image, feeling, and experience to readers, in order to the readers can imagine or as if, they are also engaged on it. However students make clear description in order to make the readers can imagine the object that being described such as the students describe about their class.

Gerot and Wignell (1994:208) mention two generic structures of descriptive text; identification and description. Another thing that must also be paid attention in writing description is its lexicogrammatical features since writing is a systematic process.

The *Tell Me What You See* technique simply means a technique focusing on students' competence to tell what they see spontaneously. The students generate and explore their ideas by telling what they see around. The *Tell Me What You See* technique first published by Bailey and Savage (1994:128-129). They state that "the present activity, which is essentially a story telling activity, focuses' learner attention on the events in a story and forces them to communicate what they see without thinking too much about accuracy". Here, the writer does not focus on storytelling activity, but the way a student can share what they see and observe to others before writing. The students can observe object first and share what they see by telling to the audience before starting to write.

The *Tell Me What You See* technique can improve the students' ability to speak first then write. It is also supported by Johnson (2001:293) "the teacher can, then, use speaking exercises for writing practice." Furthermore, Palmer (2003:16) mentions that "the ability to write depends very much upon the ability to speak: until students can articulate their understanding, they are unlikely to be able to turn it into written symbols." It can be concluded that speaking is needed to develop the idea before writing.

B. DISCUSSION

1. The Implementation of the *Tell Me What You See* Technique

1.1 Teaching Preparation

A teacher must have a preparation before they come to the classroom in order to do teaching learning process runs well. The main thing that has to be done is making a lesson plan. It really helps the teacher to find out what steps and procedures

that she will do in the classroom and achieve the aim of teaching and learning. In short, the teacher should prepare and plan well the material before come to the class.

Before coming to the classroom, it is important for the teacher to consider several things. The teacher selects teaching material that is suitable for the students and is based on the curriculum. The commonly topic in teaching writing descriptive text is about person, animal, object and building. Also, the teacher prepares command, instruction, media, technique, and etc appropriately based on the lesson plan. The teacher can create an interesting technique in teaching writing descriptive text to make students interested to do it. The *Tell Me What You See* technique is suitable to apply in teaching writing descriptive text. The teacher should consider the technique and material with the environment of the students itself. Descriptive about school environment is suitable enough for the students.

1.2 Teaching Process

a. Pre-teaching Activity

In this activity, the teacher is expected to bridge the student's mind with the topic being discussed. The teacher can build the students' knowledge by showing the pictures and guiding the students to mention a particular thing in it. The purpose of this activity is to activate background knowledge of students.

b. Whilst – teaching activity

1. Observation

In the observation the students need to be active to propose their argument simply according what they see in the picture. It is good way to build the students confidence to propose their ideas and arguments in public. For example the topic is school environment; the teacher shows some pictures of school environment and asks some guiding questions (see appendix 1).

2. Questioning

In this activity, the students are expected to ask some questions related to the picture. It is useful for students to identify the objects in the picture before observing the real object. If the students feel difficult to deliver their question, the teacher can give some indicating questions first then it will be continued by the students (see appendix 2). In this stage, the teachers should give compliment if the students can convey their idea correctly. Also, the teacher has to write down the sentences from all the answer by explaining the modality and simple present tense that is used.

3. Exploration

In exploration section, the students are expected to combine the knowledge and the skill which they get before in a task. This activity is affective because the students can explore what they know and get so that they can apply it in teaching and learning process. The teacher first introduces about the *Tell Me What You See* technique that will be applied by the students. The students are divided to be some groups and get one object to be observed. For example, the topic which is going to be discussed is about school environment, including: classroom, school building, canteen, teachers' office, library, etc. Students have to know about the topic that is

being discussed. It can make the students more interested to study because they are familiar with the topic. The observation will be taken for 10 minutes.

4. Association

In this stage, the students are expected to analyze what their group gets. Sharing and discussion are needed in this activity because it can add and collaborate the information what their friends get before presentation. Here, the students can take a note while they are observing. So, they can be easier to deliver their idea and information in their group before presenting in front of the class. The teacher can help them if it is needed. After that, the students back to the class.

5. Communication

In this activity, the students are expected to present in front of the class what they find and discuss with their group. This way is good because the students can develop their ability to speak fluently in front of the audience. According to the *Tell Me What You See* technique, the students have to tell first and then write. So, each chairman of all groups can tell what their group observe and discuss.

6. Creation

After getting the information, each member of group will write descriptive text based on their group information. The teacher has to guide the students to categorize their sentences according to which ones are identification and description.

c. Post teaching activity

In this stage, the teacher gives feedback to the students toward the process and learning achievement, it can be like giving reward to every group that have finished their writing well. Then the teacher concludes or summarizes the lesson by her/him or together with the students. The teacher reviews the activities that have been done consistently.

In addition, in this stage the teacher gives the exercises or homework to students to write a descriptive paragraph, for example, about student's house. This topic is familiar with the students, so they are more exiting to describe it into descriptive paragraph. Based on the three phases in teaching above, it can be concluded that by the *Tell Me What You See* technique the students will feel enthusiastic to learn because the topics are familiar with them.

2. The Advantages of the *Tell Me What You See* Technique

There are some advantages of using the *Tell Me What You See* technique in teaching writing descriptive text for junior high school students. They are as follow:

- a. The classroom atmosphere encourages the students' motivation, since the students have a lot of chance to develop their ideas and opinion individually or in group.
- b. The students have opportunity to speak in front of the classroom to give their own ideas and opinion. It surely can motivate them to develop their skill in public speaking.
- c. Discussion allows students to learn from each other and share their ideas related to the topic which is discussed.

- d. This activity can make the students more enthusiastic and more cooperative each other in sharing their ideas.
- e. The students get many vocabularies especially in their school environment.
- f. The teacher can monitor the students understanding about the topic which is discussing.
- g. This technique increases the students' motivation in writing, because the topics are familiar with them.

C. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

The *Tell Me What You See technique* is a good technique in developing students' writing ability. The *Tell Me What You See* technique gives a chance to all of the students to observe first, tell it and write. So, the students do not need to think about the ideas so long before writing. It is very useful and applicable to be used in writing class especially writing descriptive text. It will make the students to be more motivated in learning descriptive text. Besides that, the students will enthusiast to learn because the topics are familiar with them. Moreover, the students become easily to share their ideas in order to write a descriptive text. Then, it can encourage the students' motivation in writing and make their group work useful for them in learning English.

Teaching writing descriptive text by using the *Tell Me What You See* technique is divided in three phases. They are pre-teaching, whilst-teaching, and post-teaching. In pre-teaching, a teacher prepares students to get involved actively in learning process. The teacher discusses a topic to build students' knowledge by showing the pictures and guiding the students to mention a particular thing in it. In whilst-teaching, the teacher gives another topic and divides several groups. Here, the teacher will be helped by using the *Tell Me What You See* technique. Each group will observe and discuss it together to get the ideas before writing. Finally, in post-teaching, the teacher and the students conclude the lesson and solve the students' difficulties.

Suggestions

In order to make students excited in studying English, suggestions are given to the English teachers and it is recommended to the teacher using appropriate technique, such as the *Tell Me What You See* technique. Teacher can help the students to find the ideas of what to be written by using this technique. Students can find the idea by observing their environment without thinking too long that students often do before writing. Also, it is suggested to the teacher to use this technique because in writing descriptive text the writer can transfer the images, the feeling that writer experienced to the reader. It means that the students can get the real information according what they see in their environment in writing descriptive text.

Note: This article is written based on the the writer’s paper under the supervision of her advisor, Drs. Saunir Saun, M.Pd.

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