

# THE USE OF VOKI WEBSITE IN TEACHING SPEAKING ON ORAL DESCRIPTIVE TEXT FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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## Abstrak

Dalam makalah ini penulis membahas tentang penggunaan *Voki website* sebagai sebuah media untuk siswa Sekolah Menengah Pertama (SMP) dalam mengatasi kurangnya rasa percaya diri dan ketakutan mereka dalam pembelajaran *speaking*. Ada beberapa langkah-langkah yang dapat dilakukan guru dan siswa dalam menggunakan *Voki*. Pertama, guru menyuruh siswa untuk membuat akun *Voki* sendiri-sendiri. Kedua, guru menyuruh siswa untuk membuat karakter *Voki* yang akan digunakan. Ketiga, guru menyuruh siswa untuk tersambung ke *Voki* guru di kelas. Keempat siswa disuruh untuk mendengarkan rekaman suara yang ada di *Voki* guru. Kelima, guru menyuruh siswa untuk membuat rekaman *Voki* mereka sendiri-sendiri. Keenam, siswa mengirim hasil rekaman suara mereka melalui akun sosial media yang mereka miliki seperti *facebook*. Setelah itu, siswa memberikan saran dan komentar terhadap hasil kerja siswa lainnya melalui *Voki* mereka. Selanjutnya, siswa melakukan perbaikan hasil kerja mereka dengan maksimal berdasarkan saran dan komentar temannya. Setelah itu, guru memilih secara acak *Voki* siswa yang akan dikomentari. Langkah yang terakhir, siswa memperbaiki hasil kerja mereka berdasarkan komentar guru dan mengirimkannya ke *Voki* guru yang ada di kelas sebagai *homework* mereka. Keunggulan dari *Voki* yaitu guru juga dapat melihat perkembangan kemampuan berbicara siswa melalui akun mereka. Dengan menggunakan *Voki*, siswa dapat berbicara dengan lancar tanpa harus ragu dan takut untuk berbicara di depan kelas dengan menggunakan karakter dari tokoh *Voki* yang dibuat siswa. Oleh karena itu, *Voki* sangat sesuai untuk diterapkan dalam pengajaran kemampuan *speaking* teks deskriptif berbahasa Inggris di SMP.

Kata kunci: *Voki website, speaking, facebook, homework* dan teks deskriptif

## A. INTRODUCTION

Descriptive text is one of monolog texts that is required in Junior High School according to curriculum 2013. It is a text that describes how something looks like. Siahaan and Shinoda (2008:89) say that descriptive text is a text that describes a particular person, place or thing. It means that descriptive text can be

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used to describe a particular person, place or thing or describe how does person, place or thing looks like. Hyland (2004:29) states that the social purpose of descriptive text is to give an account of imagined or factual events. In describing person, place or thing, it gives more effects for reader because they can imagine how the object looks like.

Futhermore, Droga and Humphrey (2005:148) state that there are two kinds of generic structure of descriptive text. They are identification and description. Identification is an optional stage which gives a general orientation to the subject. Description is stage that describes features or characteristics of the subject.

Descriptive text also have characteristics or language features. Siahaan and Shinoda (2008:89) say that language features of descriptive text are focus on specific participants, use of simple present tense and use of attributive and identifying process. Basically, all of the language features have to have in descriptive text.

In descriptive text, the students can describe thing, person and place around them. In describing thing, the students can describe a particular of thing such as name, how does the thing is work and how to use it. In describing place, the students can describe the location and something they are interested in. In describing people, the students can descibe physical appearance of people such as eyes, nose, lips, hair and face and their personal appearance such as good-looking, friendly and cheerful.

Spoken descriptive text also important for the students beside written. Chrisnindyasari (2013:28) says that basically teaching written and spoken descriptive text is the same. The differences is only on the way of conveying point. One of categorizes that use by teacher in spoken descriptive text activity is describing people.

However, there are some problems which may occur in speaking on oral descriptive text. For instance, the students do not have enough self-confidence to speak and they feel anxiety to speak in the classroom. The other problems come from the the teacher. They are strategy and media that teacher use in teaching process.

Media is the plural of medium. Buckingham (2003:1) defines that a medium is something that use when people want to communicate indirectly with other people. A medium can people use as a tool to communicate indirectly with others such as television, handphone, computer and internet.

One of appropriate and effective media to use in teaching speaking is by using Voki. Kennedy and Soifer (2013:5) define that Voki is a speaking avatar which allows a student or teacher to record their voice or use an audio file and play back the result. For English language learners, the students can design their own avatar characters that look like them or their classmates, and create dialogues and monologues and practice their lessons.

Voki was created by Oddcast, a New York-based company that has been designing online applications utilizing speaking characters for a number of years. Picardo (2003:9) defines that Voki is a Web 2.0 tool that enables users to express students on the web in their own voice using an avatar, a talking character which

they can customise to their liking. Voki is a program that allows a person to create an animated character (avatar) and to give it their own voice.

There are several strengths of using Voki. First, students can record at home or in class all together and the teacher can assess them from anywhere at any time. In this particular case, there would be no need for each student to get in front of the room and one by one speak while the teacher sits at the back of the room and scribbles down notes furiously. Instead, the teacher can watch at another point in time and even has the opportunity to pause and rewind to offer more detailed feedback. In that regard, the students can use Voki for short formative assessments in presentational speaking and then perform traditional ones for the summative assessment of that skill. There is no doubt that it can be used in all disciplines to summarize articles, provide reflection, act out the opinions of characters in stories or to provide insight on a variety of other topics. Furthermore, these Voki can also provide the rest of the class with a variety of listening prompts for them to respond to.

The second strength of Voki is that it appeals to a variety of different personalities. Granted, the students that are creative will really like this program. It gives the opportunity for the students to customize the look of the character and personalize. If a student chooses to think outside the box and assume the opinion of someone else, he/she could customize his/her Voki to play that role. This program also appeals to shy students in that it is a lot easier to present through an avatar because you do not have a group of people “watching” you as you are speaking. As the teacher, this allows us to assess whether a student can summarize, analyze or synthesize.

The third strength is that to being useful for the students to present, Voki can be a engaging tool for the teacher to use. Voki is easily embedded into Powerpoint presentations and can be a great way to introduce a project or activity. For most students, this is a welcome attempt at creativity and the students will thank you after the initial shock of the surprise. Overall, the possibilities are endless if one is willing to put forth the effort in utilizing it.

The last strength is that the students can get corrections and suggestions about the work from their classmates. After the students finish their work, the students can publish and share to other by using social application that the students have such as facebook, twitter, blog, and wiki. After the students get corrections from others, the students can edit their work directly. From the corrections, the teacher also can see the students’ progress on oral descriptive text about people. However, Voki also has limitations in teaching speaking especially on oral descriptive text. Firstly, the maximum recording time is only 60 seconds. If there are too many students working at once on their recording by using Voki, as account the website can work slowly. So that, the recording has limited time.

Another thing that should be considered is that the students have to use a microphone to record their voice. In Voki, the microphone is not the microphone features in their computer but the microphone in their earphone or hand microphone. Because of that, the students should prepare the microphone that the students will use to record their voice in Voki.

## B. DISCUSSION

A teacher has to prepare everything well that related to teaching and learning process before coming into the classroom. Material is the first preparations that the teacher must has. Materials are the things that the teachers need in whilst teaching. The teacher has to prepare an appropriate material for the students. If the teacher wants to teach a descriptive text, then she has to choose the material which related to descriptive text. The next preparation is Lesson plan. In lesson plan, there is written procedures that are going to be used by the teachers as a reference in teaching. The next preparation that has been done by the teacher are prepare the equipment and design Voki as media in teaching on oral descriptive text. The equipments in the teaching speaking on oral descriptive text are computers, internet access and projector.

There are some steps in using Voki. The first step is making Voki account. It is the first step that the students can find if they are want to access the Voki. In this step, the students go to [www.voki.com](http://www.voki.com) and then register by click on the sign in or register botton if they do not have an account and complete the data. Next, click on the activation link in the Voki activation email in the inbox to activate the account. Then, as soon as activate the account a dialog box open-click on the create a new Voki botton.

**Create your Voki Account**  
 Fill out the information below to create your account  
 Already Have a Voki Account? Please [Sign In](#)

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Your Name

Email  Your activation link will be sent to this Email address

Confirm Email

Sign me up for voki's Monthly newsletter

Password

Confirm Password

Your Birthday  Use the following format MM/DD/YYYY

I accept the [Terms of Use](#).

**SIGN UP**

Interested in Voki Classroom?

The second step is create chracters of Voki. In this page, the students can click on the dice in the botton left corner of the main character box to select others character or styles from the selection lider. Then, follow the rest of the instructions in the right hand panel to create the character.





The third step is that the students' Voki are log in to teachers' Voki in the classroom. After that the students can see a topic that they will learn. The topics can be a descriptive text about famous person such as a singer.

The image shows a login form titled 'Log in to Voki Classroom'. Below the title, it says 'Entering your username and password below:'. There are two input fields: 'Username:' and 'Password:'. Below the 'Password:' field, there is a checkbox labeled 'Remember me' and a link labeled 'Forgot password?'. At the bottom of the form is a large orange button labeled 'LOGIN'.

Then, the teacher gives the students a recording voice and show the picture about a new topic to be discussed together . Students listen to the record carefully and then teacher asks the students to use their Voki by recording their voice with

the character that have been created individually and do the brainstorming together by using Voki. Finally, the teacher monitors students' work by using Voki. The teacher can monitors the students' work that have been shared to others and get suggestions and comments about their work before to be published to the classroom Voki.

The Example of Teachers' Recorded Voice

### The Famous Male Singer



His name is Justin Beiber. He is a very famous singer nowadays. **Justin is good looking. He has straight red hair, sharp nose and blue eyes. His face is also cute. He has white skin. Justin has a tall body and six-packs. His fashion is also good. He wears grey jacket and borwn jeans. He also wears black boots.** Justin is a very talented musician. He can sing beautifully. He also can play some music instruments such as piano,

After the students finish their work, the teacher asks and leads the students to save and publish their work in classroom Voki and the students also share their work to social media that they have such as facebook and twitter. Then, the teacher checks the students work in their blog randomly and make correction on the students speaking in the classroom. The students also can give comment and response to other students work in 5 minutes by sending the recorded voice in their Voki that connect to their friends' Voki. After that, the students revise their own record voice begin with lick on Voki tab and then select the Voki that they want to edit and click on the edit botton and makes the changes. If this component done by the students, the voki can be save and share directly. After the students revise their own perfectly, the students publish their own in to Voki classroom. The teacher checks a few of students recording voice randomly. The teacher evaluates the descriptive text that is spoke by students. The teacher also asks the students to fill the self-assessment rubric.

Finally, the teacher guides the students to conclude the lesson together about descriptive text including definition, function, generic structure and language features. The teacher also gives a chance to the students to ask about descriptive

text. Finally, the teacher asks the students to do homework. The homework is by asking the students to revise their own recorded voice based on the teacher corrections and comments. An alternative homework is also recommended by asking the students to make another recorded voice about familiar person around them such as family and friends with a new character (avatar).

### C. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Voki is a good medium to teach speaking on oral descriptive text about people for the students. Furthermore, Voki helps the teacher in monitoring the students progress in learning. Moreover, Voki helps the students in speaking well without feeling nervous and anxiety anymore because the students can use the characters that they have been created by themselves in their recording. Voki also makes the students' progress in speaking to be faster than speaking in front of the classroom because the students can get comments and suggestions about their work from their friends and the teacher directly in their own Voki.

Considering the strengths of Voki as a medium in teaching speaking on oral descriptive text, English teachers are suggested to do several things: the English teacher at Junior High School is suggested to use Voki for more than one meeting. In addition, the English teacher can give homework and ask the students to work, the English teacher is suggested to always monitor the students because the students can do anything else besides speaking and the teachers are suggested to conduct action research or other related researches to study the effectiveness of Voki in teaching speaking on oral descriptive text.

**Note:** This article is written based on the the writer's paper under the supervision of her advisor, Leni Marlina, S.S., M.A.

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