



## **TEACHING SPEAKING RECOUNT TEXTS TO SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS THROUGH 'MURDER MYSTERY GAME'**

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### **Abstract**

This paper is aimed at describing the use of 'Murder Mystery Game' in teaching speaking recount texts to senior high school students. This game is applied to motivate senior high school students to speak English. This game enables students to solve the problem by using the clues given to them. 'Murder Mystery Game' allows the students to share ideas to other students by giving some steps to accomplish. Those steps are interviewing character, discussing in group to find the murderer, and discovering the murderer and telling it to the class in form of oral recount texts.

**Key words:** *Speaking, Recount Text, 'Murder Mystery Game', Senior High School*

### **INTRODUCTION**

English is a foreign language which is included as a subject taught in Indonesia's education curriculum. Curriculum 2013 which is the latest curriculum in Indonesia has English as a subject to teach in both junior and senior high schools. English is learned because one of the goals of Indonesia's education system is to enable students to use English as a foreign language. The bigger goal is to enable the Indonesian learners to get engaged in English conversation with English speakers for various uses and contexts. In the context of schooling, the students' ability in English will be useful in helping them understand textbooks written in English. Speaking taught at schools vary based on the level of difficulty. Brown and Yule, 1983 as cited in Richards (2008:21) stated that there are three kinds of speech activities in speaking where they classify them based on the form and the function such as 'talk as interaction, talk as transaction and talk as performance.' In junior high school the students are given easy tasks of speaking, talk as interaction and talk as transaction, for example, they are expected to read aloud texts to learn correct pronunciations and produce very short responses from interactive conversations such as responding to greetings and thanking people. In senior high school they are expected to perform longer conversations for example giving suggestions or advice, telling opinions, showing sympathy and also short spoken texts, for example, oral recount texts, and

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others. In university level, the students are expected to perform talk as performance of speaking, for example, deliver a speech and telling experiences.

One of the task of speaking in form of talk as a performance is telling things happened in the past or oral recount texts. A recount text consists of events in chronological order. To tell these events, the students use simple past tense. In speaking, not only grammar will be improved but also other elements of speaking: vocabulary, pronunciation and fluency.

Concerning those elements of speaking, some students lack of elements mentioned above. They, for example, do not know some vocabulary in English. Consequently, they consult dictionary which takes time. Another problem, they construct sentences that are grammatically wrong. In addition, they sometimes lack of confidence to speak in front of the class. For that reason, they tend to keep silent even though they are supposed to perform a speaking task.

Those problems occur due to some factors. First, students' lack of motivation to learn English. Many students think that English is difficult. They do not want to give their efforts to learn English because they will meet the same result. As a result, they rarely make efforts to study or engage with English language voluntarily outside of the classroom such as by watching English news, listening to English songs and so on. The students only study English whenever they have exams.

There are also some problems caused by the teachers during teaching practices. The writer often found that teachers were usually lazy to spend time for designing classroom instructions which are very important in teaching and learning process. They simply do not want to arrange time outside the school to think of interesting classroom activities to teach speaking. They claim that they are too busy so they do not have time to think of that. As a result, they just use materials from books or students' workbook (*Lembar Kerja Siswa*) which are not efficient to be used to teach speaking since the students are just exposed to speaking when reading questions in English. Second, teachers do not even try to speak in English to their students. They assume that the students will not understand, and it will make their effort useless. Therefore, they will only speak in Bahasa Indonesia or even their mother tongue, for example, Minangkabau language. As a result, students are not exposed to English, and it will make them uninterested in speaking English.

The teachers' laziness puts aside the fact that there are many techniques and media to teach English that can be used. Among the techniques and media, teachers can use games. Games are interesting for students as they are very familiar with them. Students tend to be motivated if they study with fun. According to Hadfield in Cahyono and Mukminatien (2011:40) a game is 'an activity with rules, a goal, and an element of fun'. Therefore, games can be used to teach students speaking. It is hoped that it brings fun and challenging moment which can be experienced by each student. A game in learning process is not only for breaking the ice from a serious situation in learning. However, it can be a media to deliver a learning material.

Out of many games can be used in teaching speaking recount text, 'Murder Mystery Game' is the most recommended one. In this game students are expected

to communicate and interact with each other to find a murderer. To collect the information the students have to ask and answer questions from other students. At the end of the game, the students are asked to deliver an oral recount text in which they tell the events happened and finally tell who the murderer was. Therefore, with this game they can practice speaking. In conclusion, 'Murder Mystery Game' is proposed by the writer to teach speaking recount text.

### **The Nature of Speaking**

Speaking is one of the four main skills which is supposed to be mastered in language learning by students. According to Chaney (1998: 13), speaking is a way of 'constructing and sharing ideas' in many kinds of contexts through verbal and non-verbal symbols. In addition, Brown (1994) and Burns and Joyce (1997) said that there are three processes involved while speaking in order to construct meaning. They are 'producing, receiving and processing' information.

Luoma (2004:9) argues that speaking is a meaningful interaction between two or more people. Brown and Yule (1991) is in line with that belief as they divide speaking into talk as interaction, talk as transaction, and talk as performance. In addition, Brown and Abeywickrama (2010) define speaking as a productive skill of language learning in which the speakers make choices of lexicon, structure and discourse.

Thus, it can be concluded that speaking is a way of constructing meaning by involving some processes at the same time.

### **Definition of Recount Text**

In senior high school, recount text is one of the text that should be studied by students. As stated by Anderson (1997) cited in Yunianto, recount is defined as a piece of text that retells events aimed to give the audience a description of what occurred and when it occurred. Watkins (2005) states recounts are sequential texts that do little more than sequence a series of events. According to Sudarwati and Grace (2005:61), recount text is a text to tell something that happened in the past. Recount text is aimed to tell and give the reader and listeners what have happened in a series of events and where or when it happened. Derewianka (1990:14) also defines recount as the unfolding of a sequence of events over time and the purpose is to tell what happened. It sets the scene of the orientation, events, and reorientation as chronological order.

### **Definition of Game**

A game is an activity allowing participants follow prescribed rules. The participants of the game use the rules to attain a goal (Heinich et al., 1990:330). According to Hadfield in Cahyono and Mukminatien (2011:40) a game is an activity with rules a goal and an element of fun. In the same way Deesri (2002) define games as a form of play concerning rules, competition, and an element of fun. Brown (1985:317) states that games involve rules, competitions between individuals or teams and determination of a winner. Those three things can lead cooperation from the players of a team, and it can result cooperative learning. Therefore, if a game is inserted in learning process, it is hoped that it brings fun and challenging moment which can be experienced by each student. A game in learning process is not only for breaking the ice from a serious situation in learning. However, it can be a media to deliver a learning material.



## **Murder Mystery Game**

‘Murder mystery game’ has been used as a game in classroom to promote speaking skill. As Hadfield (1987) categorizes games into several categories, this game is included in problem solving and role play game. This game combines the two games. First, it is a part of problem solving games because the students need to figure out the mysterious killer of someone. Second, it is because the students are placed to play roles of people who are not real in life. In other words, in this game the students work in group and they are expected to find a murderer among them. To find the murderer they have to figure out some problems because of which after that they will be given clues about who the murderer is. And the murderer has to play a role pretending not to know who the murderer is.

According to Schneider and Kortuem (2005) the murder mystery is the combination between multiplayer with Live-Action Role-Playing (LARP) games. The game is based on social interactions as the key feature contributing to the players’ enjoyment. The students will play roles and interact with other students. The interaction will help students to speak more to other students and will increase social interaction which almost never happens in language class.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **1. Preparation**

As a teacher, preparation is important before the class start. A good preparation will have a good result and successful. A good preparation leads the teacher to a good way of delivering material but the teacher should understand the component of material and how to use the media.

The preparations can be lesson plans and materials. The lesson plan is supposed to lead the teacher to meet the goals of learning. The teacher also has to prepare some materials that are going to be used because the materials are fundamental component in teaching. The materials used should be appropriate with students’ level and be suitable with a curriculum that used. The materials used in the game are character cards and worksheet.

Before delivering the materials, the teacher needs to explain the goals of teaching speaking by using ‘Murder Mystery Game’ and they are going to play the game. The rules and the procedure of the game will be explained next in the lesson plan in order to give a preview understanding to the students before coming to the activities in the game.

### **2. The Implementation of ‘Murder Mystery Game’**

After the teacher prepares the lesson plan and materials, it is time to the teacher comes into the the implementation of ‘Murder Mystery Game’. In this section, there are three stages of teaching process that must be designed by the teacher, they are pre-teaching, whilst-teaching and post-teaching.

#### **a. Pre-teaching Activities**

In this stage, the students should be prepared psychologically and physically to join learning process. To make the students enjoy the class ,the

teacher needs to make good atmosphere. It can be seen in the example activity in pre-teaching bellow :

- a. The teacher greets the students and asks their condition whether they are ready to begin the lesson or not.
- b. The teacher asks one of the students to lead a pray in order to hope the learning process run well.
- c. Before beginning the class, the teacher needs to motivate the students to increase their motivation in learning process.
- d. Explaining the objective of the learning must be done in order to make the students know what they will study. So, in this activity, the teacher will explain to the students the objectives of the learning.
- e. The last activity in this activity, the teacher is supposed to review the previous lesson. It aims to make them remember about the lesson and also to know how far they understand about that lesson.

**b. Whilst-teaching Activity**

In this activity, the teacher comes to explain the material to the students and also apply ‘Murder Mystery Game’. This activity is based on scientific approach that is appropriate with the students and the characteristic of the lessons. There are five steps that must be facilitated by the teacher: observing, questioning, collecting information, associating, and communicating.

**1) Observing**

This activity is very useful for a fulfilment of the curiosity of the students, so that the learning process will get a high significance. The main aims of this activity is to stimulate the students to be active in exploring their opinions related to the object. Here, the students are asked to observe the objects that are going to be shown by the teacher. The objects that will be shown is related to the topic of the lesson and the object should be interesting to get the students’ attention. After that, the teacher asks some questions related to the object. For example:

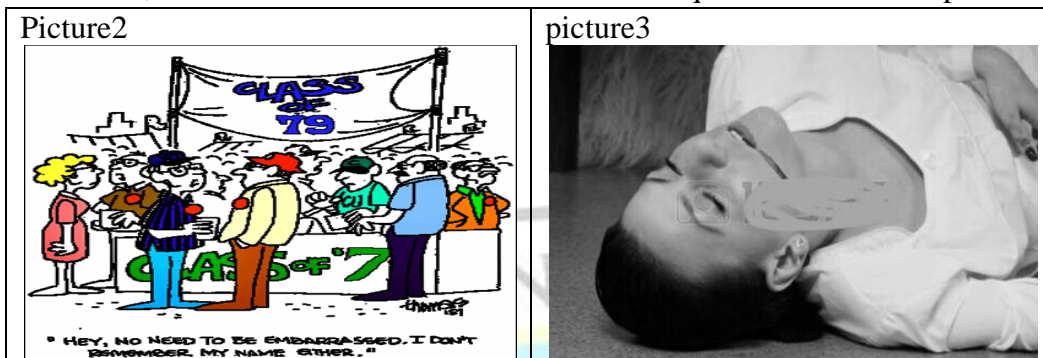
*Picture 1*



- What do you see in the picture?
- What happen to the women?
- How do you feel looking at the picture?
- How if you find someone like in the picture?

**2) Questioning**

In 2013 Curriculum, the students are supposed to ask some questions after the teacher guides them in observing the pictures. The teacher can lead the students by giving an example question if they get the obstacle in asking question. After that, the students can continue to ask the next questions. For example :



- Do you have any questions about two pictures?

An example of the possible answer :

S : who are they, Miss?

T: The first picture is the people are in the party and the second picture is the death body that we told before.

### 3) Collecting information

In this stage, 'Murder Mystery Game' will be played. Here, the teacher begins to involve the students to play the game. Before playing the game, the teachers need to explain about recount text in general, its generic structures, and language features of the text . Then, the teacher explains to the students that they are going to play the murder mystery game. Each students will be a character, one of the students will be a murderer. Before beginning the game , the teacher is supposed to give them a background information about a case that will be solved. For example :

Teacher : Ok class, now we are going to play an interesting game. You will enjoy it. The game that we are going to play is murder mystery game. In this game, you will solve a problem or a mystery to find a murderer who killed Miss McGowan based on the information which I will give to you. Do you understand?

Students : Yes, Miss...

Teacher : Do you like solve a mystery?

Students : Yes, Miss...

Techaer : Now, please read the information below.

#### Background Information

During a school reunion a scream is heard from one of the classrooms. It's 8.30 pm. A few minutes later the dead body of Miss Eliza McGowan, a cranky old English teacher is found. She has been hit on the head. There were a number of items found that may lead us to the killer: a book written by one of her ex-students Simon Donnelly, a photograph of one of her fellow teachers, a young man called Saun Sheen, and a handkerchief with the initials I.W. At the moment these are the three main suspects ,but everyone who was at the party and saw or spoke to Miss McGowan needs to be questioned.

The teacher divides the students into group and each group contains of seven students. The teacher gives character cards to each student in the group containing several clues to work out the mystery. The students should keep the information as secret of their own role from their friends. They are not allowed to give information about their own role in the character card to others unless their friends ask. To act out the game the students need to read the information from the character card. the questions are allowed when the game start and the questions are limited as only some questions are allowed to be asked. For bigger groups use the supplementary cards (they contain no real clues) or of groups of fourteen or more. The students play the game as a competition to see who can work out the mystery first.

Teacher : Class..now, sit in group, each groups consists of seven students. You have to work together to find the murderer. Now, I give you a character card for each of you and you have to take a role based on the information written in the card. Do you understand?

Students: Yes, Miss.

Teacher : Now, read your own character card and remember the information from the card. Keep it as a secret for awhile that nobody knows it except you unless your friends ask with questions I will give.

The questions are:

What is your name?

Why were you at the party?

What was your relationship with Ms. McGowan?

What is your opinion about Ms. McGowan?

When did you last see Ms.Gowan?

What were you doing when you heard the scream?

Students : Yes, Miss.

*Some of the character cards:*

**CARD 1**

**Your name is Simon Donnelly; you are an ex-student.**

**Memories of Miss McGowan :** she was a very tough teacher, she made you do extra writing assignments and she said you had talent but you hated all the extra work. But now you're grateful, you're a writer, you have just written a new book and you dedicated it to Miss. McGowan.

**Last time you saw Miss.McGowan :** You saw Miss McGowan at about 7 pm, you gave her a copy of your new book and she was pleased.

**When you heard the scream :** You were talking to Louise King, another ex-student.

**CARD 2**

**Your name is Louise King ; You are an ex-student.**

**Memories of Miss McGowan :** You thought she was an old hag , you hated her class, she gave too much homework, she made you hate school so you stopped going. You didn't do your exams and now you work in a chicken factory. You think it's all Miss McGowan's fault. You're glad she's dead!

**Last time you saw Miss.McGowan :** You went outside for a cigarette about 8 pm, you saw her with Mr. Green , it looked like they were arguing and it seemed serious. Anyway, they were talking about someone called Paul or Raul or something....you couldn't hear very well.

**When you heard the scream :** You were glad for the distraction; you were trying to escape from boring Simon Donnelly.



The teacher hands out the worksheet and explains to the students that they need to collect information about everyone who was at the party. The students should fill any relevant information on the sheet to make them easy to find the murderer. Here some key vocabulary that should the students fill on the sheet : alibi, motive, and clue.

**Worksheet :**

Name	Motive	Alibi	Clue
Simon Donnelly	Miss McGowan made him do extra writing assignments, he hate all the extra work.	He was talking to Louise King.	A copy of Simon Donnelly's book was found in the classroom where Miss Mc.Gowan was killed.
Saul Sheen	He was having an argument because she woudn't tell him who his father .	He was looking for Mr. Green, he knocked on his office door but there was no answer.	A photograph of Saul Sheen was found in Miss.McGowan's pocket.

**4) Associating**

After the students are playing the game for 20 minutes, the teacher goes to every students and asks the questions given to the students in the first place. One by one questions are asked to the students. It aims to check of the students' understanding of the game which is inderectly testing students' speaking.

Here are the questions that will be asked :

What is your name?

Why were you at the party?

What was your relationship with Ms. McGowan?

What is your opinion about Ms. McGowan?

When did you last see Ms.Gowan?

What were you doing when you heard the scream?

For example, the teacher asks one question to each student. The questions are various.

**5) Communicating**

This is the last of the game. When the students have spoken to everyone who was at the party, have them go back into their original groups. Using the information they have collected , the each student try to work out who killed Ms. McGowan and why he or she did it. This is part of the lesson usually leads to some lively discussion, most of the students will quickly guess who the killer is, but the information needs to be carefully looked at to work out the why.

After that, each presentative of the group reports their findings about the murderer and accuse one student in the group to be the murderer. They are supposed to tell the alibi and clue why they choose the person accused. The presentative can tell the event cronologically as well as recount.

To make sure the correct answer, the teacher and the students can see and discuss the information in solution card.



**c. Post-teaching Activity**

Post-teaching activity is the last stage in teaching process. In this stage, it is time to the teacher gives a reward to the winner of the game because that is one of the ways to make them motivated in learning and it is also they are glad to get a reward. Before closing the lesson it is better for the teacher to ask the students about the difficulties during the lesson. After that, the teacher together with the students make a conclusion about the lesson by asking one of the students to tell about the lesson they have gotten.

The teacher can inform the students what topic that will be discussed in the next meeting. At last, the teacher close the meeting.

**3. The advantages of Using ‘Murder Mystery Game’**

By implementing ‘Murder Mystery Game’ as a media in teaching speaking of oral recount text both teacher and students can obtain these advantages. First, by playing ‘Murder Mystery Game’, the students will be more motivated in studying because most students love playing games. If they are introduced that the teaching will use games, they can gain interest to the class and be more motivated in studying. The motivation comes from the fun and the familiarity of the students with term game. In their mind, game is full of fun and joy. Therefore, they enjoy the class more. So, by implementing this game as a technique in teaching speaking the students will be motivated in studying.

Second, by playing ‘Murder Mystery Game’ the students communicate more with other students and the teacher. To find the murderer the students have to ask as many questions as possible to their friends in the group. Consequently, they practice speaking. As they practice, they gain ability in pronouncing words, speaking with correct grammar as they are explored to the questions, and indirectly play with vocabulary.

Third, the teacher can have an interesting class while using ‘Murder Mystery Game’. It is because in the class the students have a lot of fun which is good for breaking the stigma that English is frightening and difficult. The fun that the teacher serves to occur during the learning process can be felt by the students and the students can go with the process of the game and it is good since they are not listening and paying attention only but they are the ones who lead the game and discover the goal of the game.

Fourth, the students are exposed to a lot of vocabulary in English as the clues are given to the students. To get them used to the vocabulary, they have to understand the clues and think critically to find out the murderer in the game. By using the clues they are supposed to make questions which can indirectly make them use the vocabulary. In addition, it will increase their self confidence since they already know the right vocabulary to use.

Lastly, the students are exposed to the use of simple past tense as they are playing the game. All questions and answers are in simple past tense, and it is used to tell events happened in the past. Therefore, they can gain advantage that they can use simple past correctly.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

### Conclusion

In language learning, speaking is an important skill that should be taught in the school. There are many kinds of interesting activities which can help students in improving their speaking ability. One of them is playing game. Game is believed to promote students' motivation in studying. In senior high school, students are not perfectly taught about speaking. If a game is used to teach speaking, the students can gain motivation to learn speaking more. Therefore, 'Murder Mystery Game' is a good strategy in teaching speaking to improve students' speaking ability in learning process.

'Murder Mystery Game' is an activity where each student has their own character that makes them supposed to speak up. Besides, in playing 'Murder Mystery Game' some vocabulary that related to the topic will be enriched by students. On the other hand, the students will be motivated to speak up directly because they will compete to solve a mystery to find who the murderer is based on some clues which are given by the teacher as the winner will receive a reward from the teacher. Then, by speaking with simple past tense the students can get exposure to the use of it and use it in recount texts.

In conclusion, 'Murder Mystery Game' is an interesting activity that can help students in improving speaking of recount text and vocabulary because this game is full of fun and enjoyment.

### Suggestion

In teaching process, the teacher is supposed to use various techniques to make a good and fun atmosphere in the class. The writer gives some suggestions to both teachers and students.

For the teacher: the teacher should understand what the 'Murder Mystery Game' exactly is before applying it in the class. After the teacher really understands about the game, the teacher also should make the students understand about the 'Murder Mystery Game' and give them information about the it.

In playing 'Murder Mystery Game' the player need a lot of time, so it is important for the teacher to manage and control the class well in order to get a success in playing the game. In addition, the teacher also needs to pay attention to each student and makes sure that they participate in conversations that one student must carry out six conversations.

For the students: In 'Murder Mystery Game', the students need a collaboration with other students because the students are supposed to work in group. The students should speak in English when they are playing the game.

Whenever the students get a difficulty or something that they do not understand about the game, the students should ask the teacher. In addition, the students should be self confident to involve in the game and carry out conversations in order to promote their speaking ability and remember to do their best as the game is the competition among the groups.

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