

THE USE OF DESCRIBING PICTURE STRATEGY TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' ABILITY IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT

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Abstract

This study aims to improve students' ability in writing descriptive texts. The subjects of this study were eight grade students. Total of the students were 21. This study consisted of 2 cycles, each cycle consisting of 3 meetings. In the first cycle, the picture strategy procedures were (a) The researcher gave a picture to students, (b) the researcher asked students to write vocabularies of the picture (c) the researcher asked students to arrange vocabularies into sentences. However, steps above had not been successful to improve the students' ability so the researcher improved steps in cycle 2 into (a) the researcher divided students into 7 groups with 3 members for each group, (b) the researcher gave the group picture, (b) The researcher asked students to discuss the picture, (c) The researcher asked students to write the vocabulary from the picture, (d) The researcher asked students to make a written description on each paper based on the written vocabulary. The steps improved in cycle 2 made students easy to write a description because they discussed the picture. Because the score in cycle 2 met the criteria, the researcher stopped the study.

Keywords: Writing ability, describing picture, descriptive text

INTRODUCTION

Language has a very important role for all humans. This is due to the fact that someone's language is easy to obtain and provide information to other people. This is in line with the definition of language in the Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary (Hornby 2000:752) that language is (a) A communication system in speaking and writing that is used by people in various countries, (b) Used by humans as a sound system and words to communicate, (c) A special style of speaking and writing. From the above definition it can be concluded that language is a very important tool in the world of communication.

English is language used by many people in the world. English becomes a language of international that needs to be mastered by people including students. Therefore, English is a language that needs to be taught in schools, including. The skills in language are four including expertise in English, which must be possessed by English language learners. The skills are listening skill, speaking skill, reading skill, and writing skill. This is as explained by Setyadi (2006:4) that language skills in the curriculum at school outline include four aspects, namely listening skill, speaking skill, reading skill and writing skill.

According to the interview done with the tutor of English about the value of English, it was obtained information that students had weakness in writing skills, like when they write the text of description. Then, the researcher conducted the preliminary test find out their ability to write. The instructions of the test were students were asked to write a description of 'transportation'. The score of the preliminary test showed that there were still many students whose grades were below the minimum completeness criteria, KKM of writing descriptive text was 75. Of the 21 students, there were only 3 students or 14.29% who achieved the Minimum Mastery Criteria, while 18 students or 85.71% had not reached the completeness criteria. This was still very far from the minimum completeness criteria which must be 75% of students reach the completeness criteria. This weakness is caused by students still having difficulty in writing their ideas in written form.

Because of the problem above, the researcher used describing picture strategy to improve students' ability in writing descriptive text. According to Hermanto (2013: 150) picture is one of the effective strategies in teaching writing because the implementation of this strategy is combined with writing process approach and the four teaching and learning stages. Series of pictures have some advantages in teaching writing. One of them stated by Latuheru (Hermanto, 2013: 150), that picture series have several function in the teaching and learning processes. First, pictures can translate abstract ideas into more realistic form. Second, pictures are easily obtained, for example, from schoolbooks, newspaper, and magazine. Third, pictures are usable in different kinds of academic levels. Fourth, pictures can save the teacher times and energy. A research which ever done by Maylia Suryani (2016) with the title "The Implementation of Using Picture Media to Improve Students' Writing Performance In descriptive Text (Classroom Action Research in Eight Grade Students of MTs ASWAJA Tengeran in the Academic Year of 2015 / 2016)" showed there was students' increase in writing descriptive text.

Based on the explanation from the background above, the formulation of the problem in this study is "How can students' ability in writing descriptive text be improved through the use of describing picture strategy?"

Based on the problem statement that has been mentioned, objective of this study was "To improve students' ability in writing descriptive text through the use of describing picture strategy".

METHOD

To conduct this study, the Classroom Action Research (CAR) was implemented by researcher as the research design study because the researcher wanted to solve the students' problem about writing descriptive text.

This classroom action research was conducted eight grade students that consist of 13 female and 8 male. Descriptive text is the main material.

In this case, the researcher applies describing picture strategy in the class. This strategy is applied inside the class during English learning process. In Arikunto (2006:97) there are five steps which were implemented and these steps adopted from Kemmis and Taggart, namely (1) preliminary study, (2) planning, (3) implementing the action, (4) observing, and (5) reflecting.

A preliminary study was held in order to get information how the condition of students in receiving English lesson in the class was. This study began with by asking an English subject teacher and giving the preliminary test to students to know their score. The researcher gave test of descriptive text. The test was given to know the students' ability in writing descriptive text.

In planning stage, the researcher prepared the learning strategy and determined the minimum mastery criteria. There are some steps in learning strategy. First, the researcher gave the picture to the student. Second, the students were divided into groups and asked to discuss one another about the picture. Third, the teacher ordered the student to write down the vocabularies from the picture. Fourth, teacher asked the student to develop the vocabularies into descriptive writing properly and correctly. This research is said to be successful if 75% of the number of students reaches the specified KKM, which is ≥ 75 . The students are 21 students. It means that this research can be successful if there are 15 students achieve Minimum Mastery Criteria.

In action stage, the researcher used describing picture strategy by using the steps in planning stage. In the first cycle, the research was conducted by the researcher in three meetings. The first and second meeting was used to implement the strategy and another one meeting was used to do the test. If in the test, the students had no got minimum mastery criteria, the second cycle would have conducted by the researcher by revising the weakness in the first cycle.

To get the writing skill score of students, at the end of the cycle, the researcher did a test. The students were given a picture of a person and an animal and they were asked to describe that picture based on the steps given in describing picture strategy. In scoring the test, the researcher used the evaluation of essays (Burhan, 2010:441). The following was the way of evaluation.

Table 1. Evaluation of writing

Assessment aspect	Maximum score
1 The contents of the ideas expressed	30
2 Content organization	25
3 Grammar structure	20
4 Style: choice of structure and diction	15
5 Spelling and punctuation	10
Total	100

To obtain the writing value of each student, the researcher made the following rubric:

Table 2. Assessment Rubric of Students' Writing

No	Respondent	Assessment aspect						Score
		Content		Org.	Struct.	Style	Spell.	
		Cont.	Des. res					
Total score								
Average								

To obtain average, the researcher uses the formula presented by Hadi (1981: 246). Mean is the formula to know the average of the students' scores. The formula is:

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

M : Mean score for students

$\sum X$: The sum score of writing test for student

N : Total of students

RESULTS

Based on a test given by researcher to students in cycle 1, it was obtained information that there was increase in skill of students to write down descriptive text after using describing picture strategy. In detail, about the students assessment for each aspect can be found in appendix 4. The following is the score of student in preliminary test and test in cycle 1.

Table 3. Result Comparison of Writing Descriptive Text of Preliminary Test and Cycle 1 Test

Description	Completeness			
	Pre Cycle		Cycle 1	
	Completed	Not Completed	Completed	Not Completed
Total students	3	18	7	14
Percentage (%)	14,29	85,71	33,33	66,67

From the table 3, the test result in the first cycle, it was obtained information for students' score in writing descriptive text. There were 7 students or 33.33% who got the score according to the minimum mastery criteria. And there were 14 students or 66.67% of students had not received a score according to the minimum mastery criteria. These result indicated an increase in the test given before doing research. The average value of skill of students to write down descriptive text increased until 20.91 from the average value of the preliminary test 51.09 increased to 72. However, because the criteria for success that must be achieved by students was at least 75% of the number of students getting a value of ≥ 75 , while in cycle 1 there were only 33.33% complete, so this research could not be said to be successful, so it needed to be continued in the cycle 2.

While the test result in cycle 2, it was got information that there was increase in skill of students to write down descriptive text after implementing the describing picture strategy. Here is the students' score in cycle 1 and cycle 2.

Table 4. Result Comparison of Writing Descriptive Text in Pre-Cycle and Cycle 1

Description	Completeness			
	Cycle 1		Cycle 2	
	Completed	Not Completed	Completed	Not Completed
Total students	7	14	17	4
Percentage (%)	33,33	66,67	80,95	19,04

DISCUSSION

In this section the researcher will discuss the use of describing picture strategies in improving students' ability to write descriptive text. In applying this describing picture strategy, there are several steps that can be done (Ahmad Rofi'uddin and Darmiyati Zuhdi, 1999: 168). The procedures are: (a) Observe the object to be written. To describe an object properly, we need complete materials about the object. We get the materials through observation. The questions that can help gather information for describing an object are as follows. (1) What are the physical properties of the object to be described (shape, size, material, color, taste, smell, etc.)? (2) Are there similarities between these objects and other objects? (3) What is the difference between the object to be described with another object? (b) Selecting and compiling the details of a description. Data or information that has been recorded from observation needs to be selected and arranged in the following ways. (1) Selecting data and information that give a strong impression. We must be able to see what features or characteristics possessed by person, place, thing, and another object that is most impressive. (2) Presenting information about the object we are describing with the description framework in accordance with the object we are describing. (3) Arrange the aspects in a good order, whether the location sequence, time sequence, or sequence according to interests. (c) Arrange the aspects into sentences.

In a study conducted by Risky Septyo Aji (2013) with the title "Efforts to Improve Authorship Writing Skills Description Using Image Media for Class IV Sd Singosaren Banguntapan Bantul Yogyakarta Students" The study showed an increase in students' ability to write using picture media. The steps used in this study are (a) Students observe the picture, (b) The researcher gives the opportunity for students to determine the theme and determine the title according to the picture (c) The researcher gives a chance to some students in determining the title of essay according to the picture (d) The teacher gives an opportunity to one of the students to make the outline.

Based on the above theory, the researcher arranged his own steps to be applied to the cycle 1 i.e. (a) The researcher gave a picture to the students, (b) the researcher asked students to write the vocabulary of the picture and (c) the researcher asked students to arrange the vocabulary into sentences. However, the steps above have not been successful enough to improve the ability of students so that researchers improve these steps in cycle 2 into (a) the researcher divided students into 7 groups that each group has 3 members, (b) the researcher gave pictures to the group, (b) The researcher asked students to discuss the picture, (c) The researcher asked students to write the vocabulary from the picture, (d) The researcher asked students to make a written description on each paper based on the written

vocabulary. The steps improved in cycle 2 made students easy to write a description because they had discussed the picture. Because the score in cycle 2 meets the criteria, the researcher stopped the study.

CONCLUSION

The ability of students in writing descriptive text can be improved by using describing picture strategy. This can be looked at the score of students in doing the test given. The procedures for the strategy are: (a) The researcher gave the students one picture, (b) the researcher asked students to write the vocabulary of the picture and (c) the researcher asked students to arrange the vocabulary into sentences. However, the steps above have not been successful enough to improve the ability of students so that researchers improve these steps in cycle 2 into (a) the researcher divided students into 7 groups that each group has 3 members, (b) the researcher gave pictures to the group, (b) The researcher asked students to discuss the picture, (c) The researcher asked students to write the vocabulary from the picture, (d) The researcher asked students to make a written description on each paper based on the written vocabulary.

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