IMPROVING STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT BY USING CUE CARDS

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ABSTRACT

This study concerns on improving students' achievements and to find out whether the cue cards can improve the students' achievement in writing descriptive text. This study was conducted by using Classroom Action Research. The subject and population of this study is the second grade VIII-2 students of SMP Negeri 1 Padang Bolak. The number of the subject was 36 students, consisting of females and males. This procedure of this research was administrated in two cycle and six meetings. The qualitative data were taken from diary notes and observation sheet. The quantitative data were taken from the mean of the students' score in writing test. Based on the data analysis, the students' score got improvement in every cycle. In the First Test , the mean of the students' scores was 52.22 while in Second Test, the mean of the students' scores was 64.44 and in Third Test, the mean of students' scores was 75.55. The qualitative data showed that students' was interested in the using of Cue Card as a media in teaching learning process. The conclusion is that the using of Cue Cards as a media in teaching significantly improved students achievement in writing descriptive text and also impressed the students' enthusiasm in doing the group work of Cue Cards media to make a text and to express their idea well.

Keywords: achievement, writing, descriptive, cue cards

INTRODUCTION

Writing is a very important capability for being owned by students, writing is also an excellent communication tool. Through writing, each person will be able to convey feelings, ideas, and announcements to others. Sharples (1999) actually, writing is an opportunity; it allows students to express something about themselves, explore and explain ideas. Students can convey their ideas in their mind by organizing them into a good text so that the others know them and they can think critically. Therefore, learning is very important for improved writing in particular learning of English in Indonesia because the writing is a process of transformation of thoughts and ideas into tangible forms of writing. In addition, many people choose writing. In, addition, many people choose writing as a means of effective and efficient communication of information to be conveyed in some ways like posting letters, business letters, and important information in a company's product.

In the *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan* (KTSP) 2006 syllabus of junior and senior high schools curriculum require students to be able to write some kind of genre in writing. They are narrative, recount, descriptive, report, explanation, analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, procedure, discussion, reviews, anecdote, spoof, and news items.

Based on the above, the descriptive text is one genre that must be mastered by students in learning English. And theoretically, according to Ervina Evawina S (2010) descriptive paragraph is a paragraph vividly portrays a person, place, or thing in such way that the reader can visualize the topic and enter into the writer experience.

In fact, not all students are able to write descriptive paragraph properly and in accordance with the existing elements in the descriptive text. Based on the researcher's observation at the time of the teaching practice program (PPL) contained 75% of students who were unable to write a descriptive paragraph. Teachers of English already taught the material to students well but the students still had the problem in writing descriptive text. In addition, the researcher also had looked the teachers of English language teaching by lecture, and then asked the students to write descriptive paragraph individually and there is no media.

From the explanation above, students ability to write descriptive text still very less because the learning methods that has been adopted by teachers of English language has been a method that does not fit anymore in this day because it reduced the interest and liveliness of the students in the learning process so that students were bored and did not want continue learning as they should.

In order to solve the problems and to increase the student's achievements writing skill, the teacher should make variations and choose a suitable media in teaching writing to make students feel interest. A media will help the students learn and remember information for a long period of time buildings bridges for the students. Here, the researcher tries to use Cue Card media. The researcher use Cue Card as media in teaching learning process which source from picture that taken from internet. The writer choose Cue Cards media because by using Cue Card media that is a way to help students' feel more easy to arrange their text in descriptive. By using a small piece of card which contain of picture or photos media can make students feel interest and in accordance with the characteristics that can motivate students learn. Aspects of the attractiveness of this media can be done by applying the cue card while writing. What is learned by learners is not only a sense of knowledge, but actually experienced in reality, the experience so hard to forge, and the lessons can be accepted in fun, because it is associated with the nature of the media is entertaining and exhilarating. Writer have some reason why using Cue Card media as a support of tools, its' because writer have some phenomena about the condition of student in teaching learning English process. They are:

a. Some students feel bored to join and entered the English class.
b. Students o not have a dictionary to support them in learning English.
c. The teacher of English subject always focus on English textbook while he/she teaching and make the students feel not interest to learn.

Based on the phenomena, the writer is interested in carrying out the research entitled "Improving Students' Achievement in Writing Descriptive Text by Using Cue Card at SMP Negeri 1 Padang Bolak.

Cue Cards are small photos or pictures stuck onto cards. They are intuitive flash card program. Just make up cards for what teacher want to students' memorize, and Cue

Card will quiz teacher on them. In order to prepare Cue Card as a class activity, ask the students in plenty of time to look in for small pictures relating to particular topics and the students' can write the descriptive instead. Here, the students will work in groups. Each group chooses any Cue Card and put their cards on the table, looking at them very carefully. The students' then turn the cards face down, and shuffle them. When they looking at the picture then, students' have ideas to describe about what they want to write. Keep in mind that learning will be comes easier with attractiveness activities which make them really interest to learn.

Because of that it is needed to improve the student ability in writing descriptive text by using various media and the media that is used in this study is Cue Card. Cue Card can increase the students' ability in writing descriptive text and was interesting in learning English because using Cue Card that is making connection between objects and language.

Considering the explanation above, the using of Cue Card as media was expect to enhance students' skills in writing descriptive text properly and in accordance with the existing elements in the descriptive paragraph.

The problem of this study was formulated as follows: "Is the students' achievement in writing descriptive text significantly improved when they are taught by using Cue Cards?"

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Theoretical Framework

1. **Writing**

    Writing is an important part of many standardized tests. Writing is a fundamental part of many careers. In addition to full time writers such as novelist, scriptwriters, and lyricists and many other professionals use writing on the daily job. Writing is already and will continue to be an important part of our daily life.

    Writing can also be divided into two broader categories, reflexive and extensive, based on the source of inspiration and audience for piece of writing, when you write reflexively; you choose what to write, what format to use, and whether to share your writing with others. Reflexive writing such as a journal entry, a personal essay, or a list is writing you do for yourself. Extensive writing, which focuses on topics outside of your imagination and experience, is writing that you do for others. Extensive writing includes research papers, persuasive essays, and book and theater reviews.

2. **Genre**

    Genre is a form of text which describes the general of the text. Generally, the writing text can be divided into narrative, descriptive, news item, expository and argumentative text.

    According to Gerot and Wignel (1994:190-219) that genre is one of the most important and influential concepts in language. A genre can be defined as a culturally specific text-type which result from using language (written or spoken) to help accomplish something, the kinds of the text (genre) are descriptive, narrative, recount, procedure, news item, spoof, hortatory exposition, report etc.

    This study only focuses on the descriptive writing.

3. Descriptive Text

As Gerot (1994) states that descriptive is a kind of text which is aimed to describe a particular person, place, or thing. It also has the generic structure which is summarized as follows: a) Identification which identifies phenomenon to be described. b) Description which describes parts, qualities, characteristics. c) The linguistic feature occurs in this text is focused on specific participants, the use of attributive and identifying process, and the use of simple present tense.

a. Types of Descriptive Text

1) Describing Person

It is used to describe a person, identify the person by his or her name, then his appearance such as, the type of hair, the color of hair and eyes, the shape of his or he face, the skin, and the character of personality.

2) Describing Animal

This text is used to describe animal by identifying its' name, then mentioning the habitation of the animal, describing the appearances and then its behavior.

3) Describing Place

The purpose of this text is to describe a place by mentioning its' name, the location, and describing the characteristic of its' surrounding.

4) The Phenomenon

To describe what is happened (phenomenon) and where is the location.

Generic Structure and Grammatical Features of Descriptive Text

1) The generic structure of descriptive text:
   a. Identification
      Contain the name of person, animal, or thing.
   b. Descriptions
      Contain the description of the character appearance, habitat, behaviors and the personality.

2) Grammatical features
   a. When describing a person, thing, or phenomenon, simple present tense is dominantly used.
   b. When classifying and describing appearance/ qualities and parts/ functions of phenomena (is, are, has, have); relational verbs are used.
   c. When describing something like behaviors/ users; action verb is commonly used.
   d. Mental Verbs are used when describing feelings in literary descriptions, for example,
      *She **felt** unhappy. He **liked** dancing.*
   e. Adjective are used to add extra information to nouns and may be technical, everyday or literally, depending on the text; for example,
      *Turtles are covered with a **hard, box-like** shell.*
   f. Personal and literary descriptions generally deal with individual things; for example, "*My favorite toy, my house, my big bear*".

4. Cue Card Media

Cue card is cards with words or picture on that, which are used to encourage the student to respond in pair or group work. There are several advantages of using pictures in teaching English according to Harmer (2004):

a. Pictures really help to reduce preparation time. Sets of pictures can be used again; especially it can be laminated, and can be used at any level in classes for kids, teenagers, exam classes and adults following general or business courses.

b. When it comes to using picture stories in class, the key point is not to limit teacher to a typical class activities and writing exercises. Students need as much in writing English as they can get.

5. Assessment in Writing

Good writing in Descriptive text is the main goal of writing instruction for all grade levels for students. It is necessary to use accurate assessment of writing descriptive text to know and to identify the students' ability and achievement and also to help plan future instruction. Assessment provides teacher to know which skill levels that the students' achieve or not achieve. It is needed to help the teacher to know the skill level of their students.

Based on the opinion above, it can be conclude that achievement is the result, the successfulness, the extent or ability, the progress in learning education experiences that the individual indicates relation with his/her educational learning. Achievement concerns with what someone has actually learnt whereas aptitude is the potential for learning something especially in writing descriptive text. In other words, achievement is a success in reaching particular goal/status or standard, especially by effort, skill, courage, and so on.

Here are the following of the assessment and criteria which appropriate of the generic structure and language feature of descriptive text (Knapp & Walkins, 2005:119):

Table 2: Assessment and Criteria

Assessment	Criteria		Scores
Generic Structures	Identification		20
	Description	Content	30
	Using adjective in describing the object.		20
Language Features	Textual Language	Grammar	30
Total			**100**

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study was conducted as a action research design. Action research is a method of finding out what works best in your own classroom so that we can improve

students' learning. There are many ways to improve knowledge about teaching. Furthermore, action research also done by teacher in his/her class through reflection but it is more informal and personal than formal educational research. (http://www.julianhermida.com). The action research used in the classroom was called Classroom Action Research (CAR).

This research was applied into two cycles. In general, Classroom Action Research activities involve repeated cycles, each consisting of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The result of one cycle was used to determine the need of the following cycle, until the problems get solved the media.

The Instrument for collecting Data

Quantitative and qualitative data were applied in this study. Quantitative data were collected through students test. The students were asked to write their ideas in descriptive text during the teaching learning process.

The qualitative data were gathered by using diary notes, and observation sheets. Diary notes was a personal written in evaluating the situation in the class while teaching and learning process was going on.

The Technique of Data Collection

This research used qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data was taken from the questionnaire sheet, observation sheet, and diary notes which was used to describe the situation during the teaching and learning process while quantitative data taken from the students' writing test scores which were used to analyze the improvement of the students' writing achievement in each cycle.

To discover the mean score of the class in each cycle, the following formula was applied.

$$\overline{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

Where $\overline{X}$: The mean of the student

$\sum X$: Total of scores

N : Total number of students

To categorize the number of master students, the following formula was applied as followed:

$$P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100\%$$

P : Percentage of students getting score 70
R : Number of students getting score 70
T : The Total number of students taking the test.

DISCUSSION

In writing foreign language, it may cause difficult for the students. From the beginning of the class, it is proven that the students' scores are low, and the researcher saw this problem clearly.

Here, in this research, the students score was improved and it caused after the research was controlled by group discussion intensively. In group, they were serious to cooperate together and discuss the writing task that was given by teacher. Here, after the researcher gave Cue Card picture with clue as the teaching of media for students, their attitude in learning change. Cue Card Picture allow them explain a word on a simple way by showing a picture. The improvement of students score can be seen from orientation to Cycle II. Step by step the students score was increased and improved from test to test after the Cue Card media had explained by the teacher. Most of the students raised their hand to ask when they had difficulties to understand.

Most of the students were able to improve their score because they were active doing the teaching learning process, especially when they are cooperative in a group to share idea and discuss together which things that they still did not understand yet. Besides, here the use of Cue Card picture media in the class of teaching can help and improve the students achievement in writing descriptive text.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

After analyzing the data, this study finally found that the use of cue cards as media could help students achievement in writing descriptive text improves from meeting to meeting. Students' achievement in writing descriptive text is improved from the cycle I to the cycle II. It is shown from the mean of the students' score increased and improved from the first test (52,22) to the test of cycle I (64,44) and finally to the test of the cycle II (75.55). Based on qualitative data, the use of cue cards as media in teaching learning process made enjoyable and decreased students boredom in studying English. Thus, the use of cue cards as media in teaching significantly improved student achievement in writing descriptive text and also impressed the students' enthusiasm in doing the group work of Cue Card media to make a text and to express their idea.

Suggestions

The result of this study showed that the application of Cue Card media could improve students' achievement in writing descriptive text. In relation to the conclusion above, it could be a reason to have some suggestions. The suggestions are:

1. English teacher could use cue cards as media of teaching to improve students' achievement in writing descriptive text. Cue cards as media train students to enjoy and feel easy to organize their ideas before writing.
2. Other researcher should stimulate and encourage themselves to create any new and creative ways in teaching by using various of media, so that students will feel more interested in learning and writing descriptive text, including use cue cards as media.

For students, it is also suggested since the media can train them to be used to have a brainstorming and make them fun in writing a descriptive text in a good way.

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Appendix

The Improvement of Mean Score of Students' Writing

Test	Total Score	Mean
Test I	1880/36	52.22
Test II (Cycle I)	2320/36	64.44
Test III (Cycle II)	2720/36	75.55

The Percentage of Students' Achievement

Test	Students who got 70 to up	Percentage
Test I	0	0%
Test II	9	25%
Test III	35	97.22%