

Improving Students Ability in Writing Descriptive Text Through Self-Directed Learning for Eight grade at SMP N 9 Pematangsiantar

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan keterampilan menulis siswa kelas VIII-4 SMP N 9 Pematang Siantar dengan menggunakan Strategi Pembelajaran Mandiri. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian penelitian tindakan. Penelitian dilakukan di SMP N 9 Pematang Siantar. Subyek penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas VIII-4 yang berjumlah 32 siswa. Data dikumpulkan secara kualitatif melalui observasi dan wawancara dan secara kuantitatif melalui pre-test dan post-test. Catatan lapangan dan transkrip wawancara dianalisis secara kualitatif menggunakan model Burns (2010). Sementara itu, untuk membangun interpretasi data kuantitatif, hasil pre-test dan post-test dianalisis menggunakan Statistik untuk mencari selisih nilai rata-rata siswa pada kedua tes tersebut. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan Strategi Pembelajaran mandiri efektif untuk meningkatkan keterampilan menulis siswa. Dengan menggunakan desain dan prinsip-prinsip strategi ini, siswa menunjukkan peningkatan dalam semua aspek penulisan yaitu isi, organisasi, kosa kata, penggunaan bahasa, dan mekanika. Strategi ini juga meningkatkan pengajaran dan pembelajaran menulis seperti interaksi kelas, partisipasi siswa dan antusiasme terhadap pembelajaran. Temuan ini juga didukung oleh data kuantitatif. Nilai rata-rata tes menulis siswa menunjukkan peningkatan dari 64,5 menjadi 75,05.

Kata Kunci: *Pembelajaran Mandiri, Menulis, Teks Deskriptif*

Abstract

This research aimed to improve the writing skills of Grade VIII-4 students of SMP N 9 Pematang Siantar using self directed Learning Strategy. This research was an action research study. The research was conducted in SMP N 9 Pematang Siantar. The subjects of the research were 32 students of Grade VIII-4. The data were collected qualitatively through observation and interviews and quantitatively through a pre-test and a post-test. The field notes and interview transcripts were analyzed qualitatively using Burns' model (2010). Meanwhile, to build interpretations of the quantitative data, the pre-test and post-test results were analyzed using Statistics to find the difference between the mean scores of the students in both tests. The results showed that the implementation of the self directed Learning Strategy was effective to improve the students' writing skills. By using the design and the principles of this strategy, the students showed improvement in all aspects of writing namely content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. This strategy also improved the teaching and learning of writing such as classroom interaction, the students' participation and enthusiasm towards the learning. The findings were also supported by the quantitative data. The mean scores of the students' writing tests showed the improvement from 64.5 to 75.05.

Keyword: *Self directed Learning, Writing, Descriptive Text*

INTRODUCTION

English is one of foreign language. It has becomes very important in education. Because English language including to several language lesson in our country. Foreign language has several function such as: a. language as a system of communication for everyone, b. the most complex of man's tool, c. each language is structurally different system d. international communication and study of language. Foreign language as a international language, it is used to communicate among people in the different country and also many countries. However, it can be an important to that it should be learned by the students (Feng, 2019);(Andrä et al., 2020);(Norawati & Puspitasari, 2022).

In our country, English learned since elementary school. Because English is not our authentic language, so ordinary if the students are difficult to learn it. based on that statement, English learned with many methods to make students easily to learn English as their second language. One of method that helps the students to master of English is by using descriptive method (Maru & Nur, 2020).

Descriptive text is the text about the way of things, people, or places. In descriptive texts, the students can use imagination and percept-kive sense to make reader hear, taste, smell, see, and feel as they present a good word of the subject. P. Josep Canavan stated "students may be describing a sunset, an individual, or a sinking ship. Whatever the subject, a writer's purpose in description in the same; to appeal the imagination, the emotion, and the senses (Sari, 2016);(Rahmawati, 2021);(Rismayanti, 2019).

The teaching of English is concerned with the acquisition and development of the four fold skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. The first is listening, to improve the quality of student listening skills is to listen more to recordings of English conversations or if necessary we watch more movies / videos with english subtitles (Kartini, 2020). The second is speaking, in speaking techniques that are learned in the form of pronouncing words in english, besides that with speaking skill is active english meaning we can speak English (Zaim et al., 2020);(Wahyuningsih & Afandi, 2020). The third is reading, the technique that is often used is speed reading or scanning, meaning that we read English thoroughly in a short time and read the point of each reading. The fourth is writing, the resulting language product after we are able to write is that we are able to convey intentions and objectives in writing, for example letters, poetry, novels and other language products.

One of the English skills in this study is writing. from writing descriptive texts we can add knowledge to students namely to describe, represent or express a person or an object, both abstract and concrete. by practicing writing descriptive text can help students develop the contents of students' thoughts through an object being observed.

We know that English is not our authentic language, as a fact that mastery it was not easy. The proportions and ability of English language is important for young language learner. The proportions include vocabulary, pronunciation grammatical structure, and phonology, that can give the effect to the Englishlanguage skills; such as speaking,reading listening, and writing. Sometimes People easy to speak, read and listen about english but difficult to write.

Writing becomes the most difficult skill when it is learned by the foreign language learners. According to Saddler et al., (2019) said, "Writing is a difficult skill for native speakers and non-native speakers; because writers must be able write it in multiple issues such as organization, content, purpose, vocabularies, audience, and mechanics such as spelling, punctuation, and capitalization", it is because there are some aspects that the students should learn to make a good writing.

In writing, students must understand and know about vocabulary, grammar, sentence connection sentence structure, etc. Sometimes the students can speak English fluently but they can not understand in Writing or making article. But the real, most of Indonesian students could not learn English well, especially in Writing. Many students make mistake when they write paragraph. Not all students have some abilities in pouring the ideas when

they write a paragraph, it is because they do not have interest in studying writing ability (Evmenova & Regan, 2019).

METHOD

The type of the research was an action research study following Kemmis and McTaggart model in (Istiqomah & Prihatnani, 2019);(Hasyda & Djenawa, 2020) consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection with some modifications. This study focused on improving the real condition of the English teaching and learning process to reach the improvement of the students' writing skills. This research involved 32 students of Grade VIII-4 at SMP N 9 Pematang Siantar, Yogyakarta as the subjects of the research.

The data of the research were collected through observation, interviews, a pre-test and a post-test. The observation was done by observing the condition and the activities of the teaching and learning process of writing during the action research. The interviews were also conducted to collect some opinions, ideas, comments and suggestion from the English teacher, the collaborator, and the students. The instruments were in the forms of observation checklists, interview guidelines, and tests. The data were in the forms of field notes, interview transcripts, and the students' writing scores. In addition, the assessments were done in the meetings of each cycle to know the students' progress after the actions were implemented.

The qualitative data were analyzed by using qualitative data analysis technique proposed by Burns (1999: 156) including assembling the data, coding the data, comparing the data, building meanings and interpretations, and reporting the outcomes. Meanwhile, the quantitative data were analyzed by comparing the mean scores in the pre-test and those in the post-test by using SPSS 16.0. The validity of the data were fulfilled according to Anderson et al. (1994) in Burns (1999: 161) including democratic validity, dialogic validity, process validity, outcome validity, and catalytic validity. To obtain the reliability of research, time triangulation, theoretical triangulation, and investigator triangulation were employed.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Self-directed learning model learning focuses on students' independence in learning activities. According to Setyawati (2015), Self-directed learning (SDL) is the ability of students to take the initiative to be responsible for their lessons with or without other people which includes aspects: awareness, learning strategies, learning activities, evaluation, and interpersonal skills. with this learning model, is there an increase in learning descriptive text in the self-directed learning model.

This action research was carried out in class VIII-4. During the study, several the actions they use include teaching descriptive texts about people and places, applying the Design and Principles of self-directed Learning, making students accustomed to being independent and figuring out how to write descriptive text through something that is observed according to its generic structure. That The results of the research and discussion show that the writing skills of class VIII-4 students students of SMP N 9 Pematang Siantar improve through the use of self-directed learning strategies with accompanying actions.

The implementation of self-directed learning in this study brought several successes improvement of students' writing skills on descriptive and teaching texts and learning process. This increase was achieved by using self-directed learning the strategy defined by Setyawati (2015), Self-directed learning (SDL) is the ability of students to take the initiative to be responsible for their lessons with or without other people which includes aspects: awareness, learning strategies, learning activities, evaluation, and interpersonal skills. by The use of SDL strategies provides many improvements to learning. Giving freedom to do their work with focus, expanding their knowledge, and they can choose the learning method or model that they like and according to their ability to understand the subject matter. help students in stimulate their brains to generate creative ideas.

Their vocabulary mastery increases. In addition, each stage is self-directed Learning Design and Principles supports students in writing especially in deal with the context in which they want to write. All strategies in self-directed learning do not burden students, even self-

directed Learning provides a fun and easy way to study material. Student have high interest will be more persistent and more serious in complete the activity as well as possible. In other words it can be said that there are initiatives that influence the learning model with learning interest in achieving learning competence. Knowles (in Jennings, / 012) adds "directed learning is a" process where an individual takes the initiative, with or without the help of others, and the process in self-directed learning is carried out by ware own needs in learning, setting personal goals, making decisions on learning resources and strategies and assessing outcomes.

The application of a self-directed learning strategy is one of the solutions that can be taken by students Teacher. The application of self-directed learning learning strategies will be much easier involving student activities, so that it is expected to be more realized a conducive and independent learning atmosphere compared to expository learning learning model learning that tends to be centered on the teacher, where the teacher has dominant role. A conducive and independent learning atmosphere is very possible improve student achievement; in this case the students' writing skills. Based on quantitative data that can be seen from the results of the pre-test and post-test, students' writing ability increased. Student grade point average written test showed improvement from 64.5 to 75.05.

DISCUSSION

Types of Writing

Paragraphs article and essays can be written in different types. A writer will choose a type depending on what she or he wishes to accomplish, what sort of material is to be discussed, and what kind of effect she or he wants to have on the reader. Generally speaking, there are four types of writing, though normally these types are mixed together.

a. Expository. Expository writing explains or informs. It talks about a subject without giving opinions. Expository writing's main purpose is to explain. It is a subject-oriented writing style, in which authors focus on telling you about a given topic or subject without voicing their personal opinions. These types of essays or articles furnish you with relevant facts and figures but do not include their opinions. This is one of the most common types of writing. You always see it in textbooks and how-to articles. The author just tells you about a given subject, such as how to do something.

b. Descriptive. Descriptive writing focuses on communicating the details of a character, event, or place. Source Descriptive writing's main purpose is to describe. It is a style of writing that focuses on describing a character, an event, or a place in great detail. It can be poetic when the author takes the time to be very specific in his or her descriptions.

c. Persuasive. Persuasive writing tries to bring other people around to your point of view. Persuasive writing's main purpose is to convince. Unlike expository writing, persuasive writing contains the opinions and biases of the author. To convince others to agree with the author's point of view, persuasive writing contains justifications and reasons. It is often used in letters of complaint, advertisements or commercials, affiliate marketing pitches, cover letters, and newspaper opinion and editorial pieces. d. Narrative. A narrative tells a story. There will usually be characters and dialogue. Narrative writing's main purpose is to tell a story. The author will create different characters and tell you what happens to them (sometimes the author writes from the point of view of one of the characters this is known as first person narration). Novels, short stories, novellas, poetry, and biographies can all fall in the narrative writing style. Simply, narrative writing answers the question: "What happened then?"

Descriptive Text

Descriptive text is a text which is intended to describe a particular person, place or thing. The schematic structure of Descriptive text is divided into two: Identification and Description. Besides schematic structure, descriptive text also has its own linguistic features. Linguistic features of descriptive text are: use specific participant, written in present tense, use linking verbs, use adjectives, use relational and material processes (Derewianka, 1990;

Gerot & Wignell, 1994; Nafisah & Kurniawan, 2007; and also Emilia, 2010). In writing description, while, it is possible to take time and set down details that will show with appropriate, to describe picture looks for example, what picture, what about, how many pictures, ect, to discribe someone the person height, shape of head, color of hair, look of eyes, ect. In order to be particular and interesting. We have to notice details and could to describe it in interperance.

The Elements of Writing

Althought the writing process has been analyzed different way, most of teachers would may agree in recognize least of following five general components, they are:

- a. Developing Ideas. The topics that were given to the students were considered familiar to the students. However, in this research there were some students who unable to develop their ideas well. It might be because they did not understand how to develop the ideas. The students said that they had studied how to make a good descriptive writing text. However, in practice, they did not succeed in arrange a good descriptive text. according to Barnet and Stubbs (1990:105) "A good paragraph has unity (it makes one point, or it indicates where one unit of the topic begins and ends)". To have a paragraph unity a students have to support the ideas into the sentences.
- b. Organizing ideas. Reep (2009:82) states that "a paragraph achieves coherence when the sentences proceed in a sequence that supports one point at a time. Transitional, or connecting, words and phrases facilitate coherence by showing the relationship between ideas and by creating a smooth flow of sentences". In organizing the ideas the students have to use two components of generic structure of writing descriptive, they are identification and description. It means that, in description component, the students have to describe parts, characteristics of the objects and qualities . Sometimes, the students cannot organize the paragraph well, it seems that they cannot develop the ideas of their writing well. Beside identification and description component, in organizing ideas the students also have to pay attention to the chronological order to their text. Chronological order is ordered by time; it uses to explain the process, for example where is drugs sell? The students can use: first, second, next, etc to explain about the future of the places. Chronological order also used to describe events period of time. In fact, only small numbers of the students used chronological order. The students confessed that these occurred because they did not write the outline before write the text and did not a list of ideas first. They directly wrote the ideas coming to their mind. So, it makes their texts did not organized well and many repetition of ideas presented.
- c. Grammar. Gerot and Wignell (1994) state that grammar is a theory of a language, of how language is put together and how it works. This element consists of the discussion of grammatical form and syntactic pattern. In measuring the writing ability, a teacher tests the sensitivity to the grammatical patterns appropriate to the writing genre. Grammatical features of describing The tense that is frequently used in descriptive text is present tense. The description is from factual point of view (e.g. looks, writes, cooks, etc.).
- d. Vocabulary. Writing vocabulary is all the words that can be employed in writing. Many written words did not commonly appear in speech, the writers generally use a limited set of words when communicating. According, Hadfield (2008:45) divides vocabulary into two kinds of vocabulary, there were :
 - 1) Productive (active) vocabulary is words that they are able to produce themselves.
 - 2) Receptive vocabulary (passive) is words that they understand but may never produce.
- e. Mechanics. Mechanics is the use of the graphic conventions of the language. It refers to the appearance of words, to how they are spelled or arranged on paper. The example of mechanic is when writing the first word of a paragraph, it must be intended. The rules of mechanic try to make the writing seem consistent and clear. The convention may seem arbitrary. In fact, it was developed from thousand of experiences. The mechanic represents the economic and efficient way of writing. There is a discussion about punctuation in the mechanic. This subject is a little bit complicated. Some punctuation is

cut-and dried, while the others fall into the area of usage or style. The purpose of taking punctuation in writing is making the text clearer and reading easier. There are four function of punctuation, those are: a) Classifying or enclosing (e.g. parentheses enclosing extraneous information). b) Separating (e.g. a period separating sentences). c) Impacting the meaning (e.g. a question mark making an otherwise declarative sentence interrogative) d) Connecting (e.g. a hyphen connecting a unit modifier). The function of punctuation mark is the basic rule governed and determined whether it is needed or not. The modern tendency is to punctuate the prevent misreading (open style) rather than to use all punctuation that is allowed by the grammatical structure (close style). Open style allows subjectivity, arbitrariness, and the use of some marks though it results in a more inviting product.

Self Directed Learning

Self-directed learning or what is defined as independent learning comes from the word independent and study. Independent means a situation that can stand alone not depend on people others, while learning is the existence of additional knowledge, understanding or skills that are owned by someone (Gerung, 2012). So it can be concluded that learning independence is a the process of changing behavior in a person's behavior, both regarding cognitive changes, changes affective and psychomotor changes caused by the presence of exercises and or experience without depending on others (Unsurni, 2009).

Learning activities with Self-Directed Learning models are capable measure several aspects of learning independent. Aspects measured in independent learning includes management self (self-management), the desire to learning (desire for learning), and self-control (self-control). SDL will too allows students to organize learning process in the form of self-initiative, independence, self-regulation, self-exploration. SDL learning will provide freedom to students in activities learn to develop independence learn and achieve science learning achievement.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the self directed learning was useful to improve the students' writing skills and vocabulary mastery. This strategy also improved the teaching and learning of writing such as the students' participation and confidence and the classroom interaction. Therefore, it is suggested that the English teachers implement the self directed learning during the teaching and learning of writing.

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