

IMPROVING STUDENTS' ABILITY IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT BY USING CROSSWORD PUZZLE AT EIGHT GRADE OF SMP NEGERI 8 TANJUNGPINANG

Dedek Aguslistiana¹, Dewi Nopita², Dewi Murni³

Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Maritim Raja Ali Haji

Abstract

This research was conducted to find out how good the students' ability in writing descriptive text was. This Classroom Action Research was conducted in SMP Negeri 8 Tanjungpinang to give solution toward the students problem in writing descriptive text. The teaching learning process were carried out by using "crossword puzzle" as the media to help the students to overcome their problem. It was conducted in two cycles with the consideration that by using crossword puzzle, the students could improve their ability in writing descriptive text. The kinds of data were analyzed by using qualitative and quantitative analysis. The qualitative data were obtained from the observation sheet. Meanwhile, the quantitative data were from pre-test, post-test I, and post-test II. In the pre-test, the students who got the score 60 or more were 7 of 24 students (29.1%). In the post-test of the cycle I, the students who got the score 60 or more were 11 of 24 students (45.83%). Meanwhile, in the post-test of cycle II, the students who got the score 60 or more were 21 of 24 students (83.33%). Based on the quantitative data above, the students' scores showed improvement from the first to the last test. Furthermore, the qualitative data showed that the use of crossword puzzle can improve students' writing skill.

Keywords: Crossword Puzzle, Descriptive Text, Classroom Action Research

I. Introduction

Writing is an English skill which is used to communicate some information in written form. Writing skills is very important for students in every education institution. Through writing skills students are able to express their feelings, ideas or thought in written form, so that other can understand his thought throught this written or text. According to Harmer (2007), "writing is used as an aide-mémoire or practice tool to help students practice and work with language they have been studying". However, not many students can write easily. Sometimes they forget of grammar or do not know the vocabulary that should used to write correctly.

According to Brown, the process of writing requires an entirely different set of competencies. Written products are often the result of thinking, drafting, and revising procedures that requires specialized skills, skills that not every speaker develop naturally. Writing is one way to evaluate students' skill. Writing well and correctly can be done when people know the vocabulary and apply the arrangement of grammar to become a sentence or text. There are many types of texts that must be learned students especially in junior high school. Each text has different social functions, generic structures and language features too. One of the texts studied in seventh grade of junior high school is Descriptive Text. Teaching writing descriptive text in junior high school must use the appropriate media and methods. Many factors make interesting learning even boring.

In my view in teaching practice, some of students in junior high school don't understand what the teacher says. Moreover, the students are still difficult to communicate using English. It can make the students lazy to examine English. The students don't provide attention when the teacher is explaining the material within the class. Furthermore, they just keep silent if the teacher asked them in English. So, most of students just acquire some vocabularies. The researcher needs to implement a way that can make students interested in learning. Most of this case is found in SMP Negeri 8 Tanjungpinang. Most of students did not understand what the teacher said in English and that they are hard to remember verb vocabularies that they have learned.

As a matter of fact, the researcher assumed that learning writing to students, especially junior high school students, is somewhat causing apprehension. After the observation had been done during the teaching practice (PLP) around Agustus to September 2019, the researcher found out that students of grade VIII.D of SMP Negeri 8 Tanjungpinang were still considered having difficulties in writing. There were still a lot of words that the students do not know the meaning. They asked a lot of words' meaning during the teaching learning process. One of the problems was that they were having difficulties in understanding the instructions they found in the text book or tasks they were doing. Thus, the researcher decided to do further action to overcome those problems by doing deeper research in this final task. Other problems was associated to the teaching technique, teachers usually simplest use monotonous traditional technique.

Based on the identification of problems above, the researcher found so many things to be solved. However, it is impossible for her to solve all of the problems. Focus of the research was on the teaching vocabulary using crossword puzzle "How can crossword puzzle improve the students' ability in writing descriptive text?"

II. Research Method

The method of this research is classroom action research. Classroom action research occurs within a specific classroom situation. It is usually conducted by the teacher as classroom participants, and aims to develop the situations. It means that classroom action research is purposed to improve the new skills in solving the real problems by using direct actions. According to Ferrance (2000).

The researcher has applied the cycle model by Kemmis and McTaggart (1990) of action research for each cycle, The cycle is divided into four stages. They explained as follows: (1) Planning: The planning was begun from the discussion with the collaborator regarding the existing problems during the reconnaissance. The purpose of this action was to find out the relevant problems and planned some actions. (2) Action and Observation: The actions were carried out in two cycles. Each cycle took two meetings. In each cycle, the English teacher implemented the action. She implemented the teaching-learning using the lesson plans that had been designed and applied some discussions of teaching guideline with the researcher before the classes began. The researcher completed the observation checklist, made some observation notes, and took pictures during the implementation of the lesson plans. (3) Reflection : Reflection is the evaluation of action that have been done. Reflection means analyzing the result based on the data that have been collected to determine the next action in the next cycle.

The subject of this research was the second grade of Junior High School especially the VIII.D class of the academic year 2019-2020. The total numbers of students in this class are 24 students. The object in this research focused crossword puzzle in improving ability in writing descriptive text.

In this research, there are two groups of data to be analyzed. The first data to be analyzed is the data of observations during the teaching and learning process in the form of student activity data and the second is the data of student learning outcomes obtained from pre-test, post-test I, and post-test II.

This data used to know the result of students' pre-test and post-test. The data used to analyze students' scores. In analyzing that, the researcher uses the formula:

1. Individual Score = Scoring Rubric Adapted from (Heaton, 1988) reviewed in (Uztosun, 2006)

$$final\ score = \frac{C+V+G+M}{\sum x (16)} \times 100 \quad \text{Explanation : } \sum x : \text{Total score}$$

2. Students' mean score

$$M = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

Explanation :
M : The average of students' score
 $\sum x$: Total score
N : The number of students

The researcher sum of the students' value obtained by students, then divided by the number of students who take the test to get an average value.

3. Percentage of students who got ≥ 60

$$P = \frac{\sum x \geq 60}{N}$$

Explanation :
P : Percentage
 $\sum x \geq 60$: The sum of students' score ≥ 60
N : The number of students

III. Findings and Discussion

This research began when the researcher realized that the students had problems in English especially in writing descriptive text. It was based on the observations of the researcher and also the teaching practicum and teaching experience in class VIII.D of SMPN 8 Tanjungpinang, the students had some problems with writing descriptive text. They did not know how to write a text and get some information from the text. After observing several meetings, it turned out to them only to write what was written by the teacher. They could not understand what they are learned.

Besides, the classroom problem before the research was also described in several conditions. Commonly, the teacher taught writing descriptive text by looking dictionary book, so the students knew the word just from the teacher. Because of this situation, the students uninterested in writing descriptive text. Then, the teacher only focused on the students' dictionary book. Thus, they found it easy to get bored in class.

The researcher also conducted a pre-test. The pre-test was done before implementing the teaching and learning process using the crossword puzzle. It was conducted to reinforce the problems which were stated before. The aim of the pre-test was to know and measure the students' basic in reading comprehension before the explanations were given.

The instrument of the test had been arranged and prepared before. The pre-test was conducted on September 10th, 2020. The researcher gave students a picture entitled "Cat" for the pre-test about descriptive text through Whatsapp Group. The test was in the form of writing tests. The items involved in the test are writing the descriptive text for finding components of writing.

After the pre-test was conducted by the researcher and got the students' results, the data showed that the total score of the students was 1252, the mean score of the pre-test is 52.17. There were only 7 students or 29.1 % of the students who got the score above the Minimum Mastery Criterion Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal (KKM). Meanwhile, the other 17 students were below that criterion.

From the analysis, it could be seen that almost VIII.D class of SMPN 8 Tanjungpinang students' writing descriptive was still very low. Thus, it must be improved by implementing the crossword puzzle. The researcher used the crossword puzzle to improve the students' vocabulary in writing descriptive. To reach the target, the researcher conducted classroom action research. It has the aim to improve the students' vocabulary in writing descriptive of SMPN 8 Tanjungpinang that was done two cycles in four meetings.

The first meeting was done on September 12th 2020. The researcher greeted the students and checking the students' attendance. For the first meeting, all of the students were present. The total of them was 24 students. Starting the teaching and learning process, the researcher asked a simple question about descriptive text and simple present tense. The researcher introduced crossword puzzle. The researcher gave ppt about descriptive texts to the WhatsApp group. And then the researcher explained the description of descriptive text, the function, the identifying of the main idea, and the generic structure. After that, the researcher gives some examples of descriptive text, make groups and the researcher asked them to writing descriptive text. Before the meeting ends, the researcher asked the students difficulties in understanding the lesson, gave feedback, concluded, and greeting.

The second meeting was done on September 13th 2021. The researcher reminded again about the materials that have been studying in the first meeting, it focused on the descriptive text. Starting the teaching and learning process in the second meeting, first, the researcher introduced crossword puzzle and teaching vocabulary by using crossword puzzle through a WhatsApp group. The researcher divided students into groups. The researcher gave a crossword puzzle sheet. The researcher also teaches how to writing descriptive text with vocabulary in crossword puzzle. Second, the researcher gives an example again about another croosowrd puzzle. In the last, the researcher assigns the Post-test I in the first cycle to students. The researcher gave students a picture and students write paragraph consisting 5 sentences based on the picture. The researcher took the score as the assessment.

Based on the result of the post-test I, the data showed that the total score of the students was 1438, and the mean score of the class increased to 59.92 which there were 11 students or 45.83% of the students who passed the Minimum Mastery Criterion or KKM 60. It is indicated that students test was higher than the pre-test. It means that the students' ability in writing descriptive improves but it was not significantly.

The actions on cycle II were carried out in two meetings on September 15, and January 16, 2020. The actions were focused on implementing the cycles in the crossword puzzle technique and the principles of crossword puzzle. The researcher teaches the students using crossword puzzle to have a good vocabulary in writing descriptive, especially in writing descriptive. In the main activity, the plan of the implementation of crossword puzzle techniques in the teaching and learning process was conducted in two meetings.

In the first meeting, the researcher gives some examples of descriptive text to the WhatsApp group. And then the researcher gives some question of descriptive text and croosword puzzle to students. The researcher and the students discuss about croosword puzzle question . They begin to do write descriptive text and ask for vocabulary they don't know yet. The researcher also asked students about their difficulties in descriptive text maps and providing solutions for them.

In this cycle, the researcher gave a different topic in every meeting to avoid students' boredom in writing. Thus, the researcher and the students would discuss the text using croosword puzzle to writing descriptive text together. Besides, the students could write the descriptive text.

In the second meeting, The researcher gave some questions related to the students' knowledge and experiences in the first meeting. The researcher gave crossword puzzle and the researcher guided the students to answer these questions. The researcher also asked students about their difficulties in writing descriptive text and providing solutions for them. Last, the researcher assigns the Post-test II in the second cycle to students. The assignments are used as a final assessment after students are involved in the teaching and learning process using crossword puzzle.

The result of the post-test II in the second cycle showed that the total score of the students was 1668 and the number of the students who succeed in the test was 21 of 24 students. Thus, the mean of the students' score of the test was 69.5. It can be seen that the students' score was improved. It means that the students were able to do work well. The percentage of the students' score of the test was 21 students succeed and got score 60 was 83.33 %.

After achieving the improvement of students' writing descriptive where 21 students who passed the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM), therefore the research decided to stop CAR because the students' ability in writing descriptive text was improved through crossword puzzle. It means, the researcher did not need to revise the plan.

The implementation of the crossword puzzle can improve students' ability in writing descriptive. The crossword puzzle deals with the creative note-taking process that is useful for remembering, connecting, and understanding vocabulary. During the implementation, the classroom learning atmospheres supported the teaching-learning writing better than before the research. The conducted lessons gave more opportunities to the students to practice the writing they learn. The activities included pronouncing the words and clues in the crossword puzzles, unplanned pronunciation practice, and making sentence activity. Therefore, the students were interested and enjoyed the teaching and learning process. In general, the implementation of crossword puzzles gave positive impact to the teaching and learning English in VIII.D of SMP Negeri 8 Tanjungpinang.

Based on the report analysis of implementation in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 above, the researcher found out that the actions implemented have been improved the teaching and learning quality, especially in writing learning. The implementation of crossword puzzles has successfully improved the students' ability in writing descriptive text while they were learning vocabulary including learning new words, practicing spelling and using the words they learn. According to Moursund (2007) it is clear that solving crossword puzzles helps to maintain and improve vocabulary, spelling skills, and knowledge of many miscellaneous tidbits of information. Solving crossword puzzles tends to contribute to self esteem. For many people, their expertise in solving crossword puzzles plays a role in their social interaction with other people.

Table 1. The Percentage of students' writing descriptive text

| Meeting | Students who got ≥ 60 | Percentage |
|--------------|----------------------------|------------|
| Pre-test | 7 | 29.1% |
| Post-test I | 11 | 45.83% |
| Post-test II | 21 | 83.33% |

From explanation above shows that by using crossword puzzle most of students improve their writing descriptive. Moreover the result of t-test in cycle I and cycle II shows that there is a significance influence between pre test and post test mean. And the result of post test in cycle II and in Cycle I are greater than pre test. It shows that the student's achievement in writing descriptive text has improved. By mastering the ability in writing, the students will be easier to writing descriptive text.

In this case, the student's improvement is influenced by some factors. The first is the use of media crossword puzzles that can make students feel there is a variation in learning process. So, they are not bored in learning English. The second factor is the how used in presenting crossword puzzle. The students are easier in solving the crossword in cycle II than in cycle I. In this research the researcher uses game in presenting crossword puzzle. However, she used the different procedure in cycle I and cycle II. The third factor is the students themselves. Although the teacher has been creative and applying the good media in teaching learning process, if the students don't have a motivation they will not get a satisfactory achievement in their study. It is showed by some of students

who are still passive when they are doing the crossword puzzle, so they get the achievement are not maximal.

IV. Conclusion

Based on the result of the research that had been done in two cycles (cycle I and cycle II) consists of four meetings, it can be taken the conclusion that there is an improvement. The students' ability in writing descriptive text improved after being taught by using crossword puzzle. Crossword puzzle can improve students' ability in writing descriptive text.

During the implementation, the classroom learning atmospheres supported the teaching-learning writing descriptive text better than before the research. The conducted lessons gave more opportunities to the students to practice the vocabulary they learn. The activities included pronouncing the words and clues in the crossword puzzles, unplanned pronunciation practice, and making sentence activity. Therefore, the students were interested and enjoyed the teaching and learning process. In general, the implementation of crossword puzzles gave positive impact to the teaching and learning English in VIII.D of SMP Negeri 8 Tanjungpinang.

In conclusion, using crossword puzzle helped the students improve their ability in writing descriptive text. It helped them not only to meet new words but it also maintained the words they already know. They could easier memorize the words they learnt because the activities enabled them to meet the words more than one time. Moreover, it also because the use of crossword puzzles is considered interesting and challenging, so that they could learn without felt that they were being forced. Therefore, the teaching and learning processes become more enjoyable and valuable.

V. Bibliography

- Brown, H. Douglas. 2000. *Teaching by Principles An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*, Second Edition. California.
- Ferrance, Eillen. 2000. *Action Research*. USA. Northeast. And Islands Regional Educational Laboratory. Brown University.
- Harmer, Jeremi. 2007. *How to Teach English*. Edinburgh Gate Harlow Essex: Pearson Education Limited.
- Heaton, J. (1988). *Writing English Language Test*. New York: Longman Pub Group
- Kemmis and Taggart. (1990). *The Action Research Planner*. Victorio. Deakin Univ Press.