

IMPROVING STUDENTS' WRITING ABILITY THROUGH CUE CARDS TECHNIQUE

by

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Abstract

This research is a qualitative research with two variables. The classroom action research is conducted at physics study program of Muhammadiyah University of Metro. The subject of this research is first semester students of physics study program. The number of the students is 22. The objective of this research was to know how cue cards technique improve the students' writing ability in descriptive text. The researcher choose one class because they have problem in writing ability. This research was conducted in two cycles. Each cycle consisted of planning, acting, observing and reflecting. The data were collected from test (pre test and post test), observation. The result of this research can be seen from the average score of pre test (before treatment) was 61,86, in cycle 1 was 70,90 and in post test cycle 2 was 78. That was involved in upgrading maximally. It implied that cue cards technique can improve the students writing ability in descriptive text. In other words, the class had fulfilled criteria success of standard students competency from the school. It was supported by the observation of the students. From the result of the discussion, the researcher concludes that in this research there is an improvement student writing ability in descriptive text using cue cards technique at the students of physics academic year 2015/2016.

Key Words : Descriptive Text, Writing Ability, Cue Cards Technique

INTRODUCTION

Writing is a skill which express idea, feel and thought which are arranged in words, sentences and paragraph. Writing skills deal with the ability to arrange the graphic such as letters, words and sentences of certain language being used in written communication in other that the reader can understand the message or information. Writing is basically the process of expressing ideas and thought of the writer using knowledge of structure and vocabulary to combine the writer's ideas as a means of communication. It is very important in teaching and learning English.

There are some problems found in the field when giving writing materials to the students, especially in descriptive text. The first problem is that the students writing is not comprehensible because the ideas are not clearly stated, the ideas and sentences are not well organized. The second problem is lack of stucture knowledge and vocabulay so their product of writing are not good enough. Another problem is the students have low motivation and the students not interested in doing the task since the writing activities are not interesting because

they have no idea about mechanical engineering vocabularies. Based on the explanation above and the strong desire of finding the solution of these problems, the researcher has a motivation to do the research by finding out the effective methods on technique to teach writing in formal class by using Cue Cards Technique.

Cue Cards Technique

Media is one of important things in teaching and learning process. Cue cards are one of media in teaching. Mora (1994) states that cue card is a card with picture and it has cue words to help the students initiate conversation. From the definition above, cue words in cue cards help the students describe something or someone in the picture orally.

In line with this definition, Harmer (2007) states that cue cards are cards with words and pictures on them, which students use in pair or group work. Cue cards also make the students speak up on the spot or particular word or phrases in a conversation or in sentence. It can be concluded that cue cards make the students write in paragraph. Besides, cue cards can be used in work group in big classes and they are appropriate to use in the context of Indonesian teaching and learning classroom. Cue cards can be one of ways to solve the problem in the class. For instance, physics class consists of 22 students. Based on the number of the students in each class, it can be concluded that physics has small classes and cue cards can be one of alternative media in teaching in small class because cue cards help the lecturer manage classroom situation.

Furthermore, Bazo (2007) adds that cue cards are small cards with photos or pictures in envelope. Cue cards can also be used in simple activities such as students work in pairs. From the definitions given above, it can be concluded that cue cards can be one of alternative media in teaching learning process. Cue card is a picture on which has word on it as cue in learning. In addition, cue card can be used in pair work or group work.

Writing Ability

Writing is one of activity in communication that is expressed in using a language (Pardiyono,2006). According to Flynn and Stainthorp (2006) writing is a complex process that allows writers to explore thoughts, ideas, and make it visible and concrete. Richards and Renandya (2002) state that the process of teaching writing consists of four basic stages. They are planning, drafting, revising and editing. For each stage, various learning activities that can

support the learning of specific writing skills are suggested. For instance, in the planning stage, lecturers can help their students to improve their writing skills in generating ideas by giving activities, such as brain storming, clustering and rapid free writing. The various effects a writer may wish to have on readers to inform, to persuade, to entertain or result in different kinds of prose.

Thresia (2016) state that descriptive text encourages the students' ability to create a written account of a particular experience . The goal of which is to paint an image that is vivid and moving in the mind of the reader. Descriptive writing is writing that uses a lot of adjectives to show readers someone or something in a very detailed manner. Descriptive text has the features of the text, the generic structure and language focus. The generic structure of descriptive text is identification and description. Identification parts identifies a particular thing to be discussed.

Using Cue Cards in Teaching and Learning process

Cue cards have characteristics and different uses in teaching and learning process. According to Bazo (2007), cue cards can be implemented in some activities in teaching and learning process. The class divided into 5 groups that consist of 4-5 students. First, this activity is "choosing the picture". The lecturer prepares one envelope (10 cards), then the lecturer gives the students guidance as to the sort of questions they should ask and the students work in groups. Each group chooses one card and puts their cards on the table. Second, this activity is the lecturer prepare an envelope (10 cards). The students work in group and follow the instructions from the lecturer. Put the cue cards on the table. Look at the pictures and every group make a descriptive text based on the picture that they have in envelope.

Third, this activity is "fast". The lecturer prepares 10 cards. This activity will be carried out in groups. They take it in turns to pick up a card, look at it, and make a descriptive text in English. The group who makes many mistakes or late more than three seconds to put on the whiteboard is less point. The winner is the student with fewest points.

Additionally, Mora (1994) suggested about using cue cards to foster speaking and writing. One card per group and each card should have one word on it. The students are organized into groups and each group receives a card. In the context of the research, the students are

organized into some groups and each group is given cue card. The students have to describe something or someone in detail based on cue card that is given by the lecturer.

Upon all, the research question of this study;

1. Can Cue Card technique improve the students' writing ability in descriptive text?
2. How are the students' activities in writing ability through Cue Cards technique at the first semester students of physics study program?

METHOD

In conducting this research, the researcher used action research design. The researcher uses the data of students writing test, in order to see the problems faced by the students and lecturer in writing class. After that, the researcher examines the problem solution. The problem solution is teaching descriptive text in the form of Cue Cards. The researcher analyzes and discusses the observation result during teaching learning process (the strength and weaknesses that will be done by lecturer and students during teaching learning process using cue cards technique). Arikunto (2006) says that classroom action research is a reflection in activity that showed and it was happening in the class. The main characteristic of action research is the spiral cycles consisting of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. Population has important role in the research. Before doing the research, the researcher has to decide the population of the research. A good sample is one that is representative of the population from which selected. In this research the sample is physics study program of Muhammadiyah University of Metro

Pre-test and Post-test

Pre-test is given before treatment to find out so far the students basic descriptive text in the beginning. So the writer knows quality and capacity the students. Post-test is given after treatment that was done to know the result of learning process especially in questioning technique whether they have progress or not.

Observation sheet

In this research, the researcher observes directly what is happening during teaching learning process when the lecturer implements guided writing in the form of Cue Cards

technique in teaching descriptive text. The researcher will use form of observation; it is observation of students' activity. The aspect of students' activity classified into five aspects, respond to the lecturer question, answer the question, giving attention to the lecturer explanation, make the notes and do the exercise.

Data Collecting Technique

The data will be collected by primary and secondary data. Observation will be used to know the students' attitude (qualitative data) during the research. The research data of this research as follows: In this research the researcher uses written test to collect the data. This data is the main technique to collect the data that is used to get data about the students' writing comprehension. The researcher took observation and writing test to know how far the students' writing ability in descriptive text.

Data Analysis Technique

In this research, the researcher validated this data by using writing test and observation. After getting data from test and observation, the researcher analyzed the data based on the limitation of the problems and objectives of the research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted at the physics study program of Muhammadiyah University of Metro. The researcher chose one class as subject.

The Implementation of Cycle 1

Planning

In the planning, the researcher prepared the lesson plan and the test items of descriptive text arranged from the syllabus. The implementation of action was conducted in two cycles. Each cycle had three meetings. Each meeting in every cycle had 80 minutes. After preparing syllabus and preparing lesson plan for the research, the researcher and the collaborator gave pre test for students in the first meeting.

Action

The researcher gave pre test to see the students' ability in writing. This was the first meeting which was conducted on Tuesday, April 7th 2015. The second meeting was conducted on the Thursday, April 9th 2015. Furthermore, for giving brain storming to students

the researcher asked to the students about what is descriptive text? Furthermore, the researcher described about the descriptive text and asked the students to listen the lecturer explanation. Then, after the researcher explained about the descriptive text, the researcher asked the student for making group. The lecturer prepare an anvelop consist of 10 cards. Then, the leader of the group choose one card in anvelop and lecturer give an instruction to do the excercise. Every group make descriptive text based on cue cards that they got. Almost of them was enthusias and they could finish the excercise well. Because the limited time to do the excercise, the student compete to put the result on the white board.

After treatment was done, the researcher gave a post test in cycle I on Saturday 11th 2015. The researcher continued the activity by checking the attendant list. In this chance, the researcher asked the difficulties about the materials in previous meeting. In the last, the researcher gave post test to know the result. The students were given 50 minutes to do the test and after that the students collected the sheet to the researcher.

Observation

In observation part from the action above, the researcher presented the meeting in teaching describing animal. In the first meeting the researcher gave a pre test to the students in order to know their basic understanding in descriptive text. In fact, many of them had low understanding in writing descriptive text. In the second meeting, before explaining the descriptive text, the researcher asked the students what their problem in the previous meeting. Then the researcher explained about descriptive text. Moreover, to know how far the students understanding about descriptive text, the researcher gave excercise in a group. After the students finishing the excercise, the researcher gives homework for the students.

In the third meeting, the researcher checked the students excercise and their homework in the last meeting. Then, the researcher gave post test for students, it is about 50 minutes. The result showed that some students still got low score.

Reflection

From the observation result of learning process happened in the cycle I, it can be concluded that teaching and learning process by using cue cards technique has not reached competence minimum standard of this research yet. Not all of students get the chance to express their understanding because the limited time. In cycle 1 in this research, the researcher found some weaknesses in treatment until post test in cycle 1. The researcher did

not gave more explanation so the students rather confused but they afraid to asked something about the materials. The researcher felt not satisfied to the students respond when the researcher gave the materials. The students not active in the class. The reasons above also become the weaknesses of the researcher. The strengthens were the researcher can applied the technique based on the students ability and also this technique very interesting in writing learning process. Not all of students get chance to express their understanding because the limited time. So the post test only 36% of the students get score 75 and the other 64% students get worse. It is only about 8 students got score above 75. Because cycle 1 had not been reached, so the researcher continued in cycle II by changing a lesson plan, especially in action.

CYCLE II

In this part could be explained as follow :

Planning

In planning the researcher prepared the lesson plan and also gave the same test (descriptive text) to arrange suitable with syllabus. There was differences from making lesson plan in cycle 2. In cycle 2, the researcher made deeply in giving knowledgement about the genre of descriptive in teaching learning process. In cycle 2, the researcher make a different in excercise. The students described about people.

Action

The action of this cycle was done in three meetings too. The fourth meeting was conducted on Tuesday, April 21st 2015. This meeting opened by greeting, warming up or brain storming, briefly motivating and checking the students attendance list. Before entering the subject, the researcher ased the students' problem which their face in the previous action and solved it together.

The researcher explained more detail about descriptive text (the generic structure and language feature of descriptive text). Furthermore, to know how far students understood the descriptive text materials, the researcher guided the students to make 5 group which consist 4-5 students. Then the researcher gave a descriptive text with the topic is famous artist, there are Dian Sastrowardoyo, Raffi Ahmad, Budi Anduk, Justin Beiber, Sule, Jokowi, Luna Maya, Syahrini, Agnes Monica, and Daus Mini. Every leader of the group chosse 1 cards in

anvelop. Before the students do the task, the researcher explained about how to do the task and gives the example of the task. The students making a descriptive text based on the picture that the leader of the group got. Unfortunately, some students still had some mistakes. Then the researcher gave correction. Furthermore, the researcher gave the result the task based on the lecturer scoring. Because the time was up, the researcher closed the meeting.

The fifth meeting was conducted on Thursday, 23 April 2015. The meeting was opened by greeting, brain storming and checking students attendance list. The researcher gave post test II and gave 50 minutes to do the test. After that, the students have to collect their sheet. Then the lecturer gave the conclusion about the research and close the meeting.

Observation

In observation, the researcher presented three times in teaching descriptive text. In the fourth meeting, the researcher asked the students problem in the previous meeting and solved the problem together. The researcher explained the descriptive text and then the researcher distributed a famous artist picture for each group. Then the students comprehend a descriptive text in group. The students look so happy and enjoy. In the last of meeting, the researcher gave a post test II. Factually, about 81% the students could do the post test II well.

Reflection

This is the conclusion of the observation result. That teaching and learning process using cue cards technique had achieved competence minimum standard of research. This success can be reached because deeply explanation better than in cycle 1. More 75% of the students got score above 75 and more 75% of the students got high motivation in learning English. Because this research had reached the target, so the researcher stopped this research.

The Result of Pre Test

Before started the material of teaching learning process of writing skill in the classroom, the pre test was done to know the beginning of students' mastery in writing skill. The result of pre test score was 1361 and average score was 61,86. The number of students were 22. The highest score was 70 and the lowest score was 50. It can be seen that many students still got the score less than the standard minimum. Most of students could not do the test well. They found difficulties when writing the text.

The Result of Post Test 1

After teaching the material of writing descriptive text by using cue cards technique, the post test was given to the students. The type of the test between pre test and post test 1 is

similar. The total score of post test in cycle 1 was 1560 the average score was 70,90. The highest score was 85 and the lowest score was 60. It can be seen that only some students reach the standard of minimum. It was better than pre test.

The Progress of Students Average Score From Pre Test to Post Test in Cycle I

The progress of the students' writing skill before treatment and after treatment can be seen in the following table of progress students' average score from pre test and post test.

Table 1 The Progress of Students Average Score from Pre Test to Post Test 1 in Cycle 1

The Average of Pre Test	The Average of Post Test 1	The Progress
61,86	70,90	9,04

Source : The Students' Score of Pre Test and Post Test in Cycle 1

The Result of Post Test in Cycle II

In this research, the teaching learning process run effectively. The result of the test increased very well and the students achieve the standard of minimum score.

Table 2 The Students Score of Post Test in Cycle II

No	Students Score	Frequency	Percentage
1	60 - 70	3	14%
2	71 - 80	12	54%
3	81 - 90	7	32%
	Total	22	100%

Source : The Students' Score of Post Test in Cycle II

Based on the table above, it is shown that the students' score was various. The highest score was 90 and the lowest score was 62. Therefore, researcher does not need continue to the next cycle again. The students' score always increased in each cycle and more than 80% students achieve standard of minimum score. So, in this research cue cards technique can increase students' skill in writing descriptive text.

Average Score Progress from Post-Test in Cycle I to Post-Test in Cycle II

After doing post test 1 the researcher continue to cycle 2 to increase the students score. The progress of the students' writing skill in cycle 1 and cycle 2 can be seen in the following table.

The Progress of Students Average Score from Pos Test 1 to Post Test 2

The Average of Post Test 1	The Average of Post Test 2	The Progress
70,90	78	7,10

Source : The Students Score in Post Test 1 and Post Test 2

Based on the table above, it is shown that the students score increase from post test in cycle 1 to post test in cycle 2. So, in the cycle 2 the researcher get success to make the students achieve standard of minimum score. The progress of the score is 7,10.

Discussion

There are two cycles in this research. In each cycle there was increased score. So the first meeting the students felt confuse and not understand with the technique. So, the researcher gave explanation to the students and task to write descriptive text according the picture. Then the researcher gave explanation about cue cards technique. The researcher use cue cards technique in this research so the students should increase their writing skill by using this technique.

Based on the result of the research, it can be seen that the students understanding in learning decsriptive text improved after they learn using cue cards technique. It can more be explained from the average score of pre test, post test cycle 1 and post test cycle 2. From the calculation of pre test, the average score before the students learn by cue cards was 0% students get score 75. After treatment the average score increase about 36% students get score 75 (cycle 1) and in the cycle 2 the average score of post test 2 was 78 it is about 81% students get score 75 (cycle 2).

This research was different with all of previous research overviews, the research by Mulyono and Setiawan. The difference was on the result of the test. The result of the test from the previous research was different in the progress of the average score in every cycle, In fact, all technique that used were improved effective in increasing students writing ability.

The research was divided into two cycles that started by PRA action. It showed improvement significantly from one meeting to the next meeting, from one cycle to the following cycle.

The result indicates that descriptive text gave a better gain to students after they learn by cue cards technique. Cue cards technique also gave motivation for them to learn English especially in descriptive text. Most of the students felt happy, fun, enjoy and not bored when they in teaching learning process. Based on Bazo (2007) adds that cue cards are small cards with photos or pictures in envelope. Cue cards can also be used in simple activities such as students work in pairs.

Finally, the researcher concluded that the teaching learning by using cue cards technique can improve the students' writing ability of descriptive text especially in the physics study program of Muhammadiyah University of Metro.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

In this research, the researcher uses Classroom Action Research (CAR). The researcher was done the research in two cycles. Based on the discussion and the result of the implementation of instructional writing ability by using cue cards technique at physics study program of Muhammadiyah University of Metro. The students were easier to make paragraph by using cue cards technique to make descriptive text more increase than before treatment in teaching learning process. The students also be more effective in teaching learning process especially in doing the task and it can be seen from the score that they get continued increase in each cycle. So, cue cards technique can increase students' writing ability in making descriptive text. Finally, the researcher concluded that cue cards technique can improve the students writing ability.

Suggestions

Considering the positive result for implementing cue cards technique to increase the students ability in teaching learning process, the researcher suggest to the English lecturer can use this technique to contribute teaching English using cue cards technique to increase students writing ability.

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