

Using Realia to Teach Physically Disabled Students in Writing Descriptive Texts

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Abstract

This case study is focused on teaching descriptive texts by using realia. The writer took the 8th grade students of SMPLB Negeri Ungaran as the subjects of the study. The aim of this research is to know the implementation of teaching descriptive texts that cover parts, qualities, and characteristics of the objects. This study was carried out around four meetings. In each meeting, the researcher observed the situation of the class and the students' activities in that classroom. The data collection method used in the research was observation, interview, and documentation. In implementing the research, the researcher found several problems and difficulties in teaching learning processes. One of them is that, the teaching physically disabled students are not easy. It has to be slowly because the students' ability in writing the lesson is limited. The other problem comes from the teacher him/herself that never uses media or tools to teach physically disabled students. It is a matter of fact that teaching physically disabled students needs media to make them easily understand the learning materials. One of the media that could be used is realia. From this research it is expected that the problems could be solved and a new paradigm in teaching descriptive texts for disabled students could be considered.

Keywords: *Descriptive Texts; Physically Disabled Students; Realia*

Abstrak

Studi kasus ini difokuskan pada pengajaran teks deskriptif dengan menggunakan realia. Penulis mengambil siswa kelas 8 dari SMPLB Negeri Ungaran sebagai subyek penelitian. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui pelaksanaan pengajaran teks deskriptif yang meliputi bagian, kualitas, dan karakteristik objek. Penelitian ini dilakukan sekitar empat pertemuan. Dalam setiap pertemuan, peneliti mengamati situasi kelas dan kegiatan siswa di kelas itu. Metode pengumpulan data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Dalam mengimplementasikan penelitian, peneliti menemukan beberapa masalah dan kesulitan dalam proses belajar mengajar. Salah satunya adalah bahwa mengajar siswa dengan cacat fisik tidak mudah. Hal tersebut harus dilakukan secara perlahan karena kemampuan siswa dalam menyerap pelajaran terbatas. Masalah lainnya berasal dari guru itu sendiri yang tidak pernah menggunakan media atau alat untuk mengajar siswa cacat fisik. Ini adalah fakta bahwa mengajar siswa cacat fisik membutuhkan media untuk membuat mereka mudah memahami materi pembelajaran. Salah satu media yang dapat digunakan adalah realia. Dari penelitian ini diharapkan bahwa masalah dapat diselesaikan dan paradigma baru dalam mengajar teks deskriptif untuk siswa cacat dapat dipertimbangkan.

Kata Kunci: *Teks Deskriptif; Siswa Cacat Fisik; Realia*

Introduction

In accordance with UNESCO (2004), education is the basis of any serious policy for the personal and social development of children and youths; and human rights are the path that makes it possible for all to have a dignified life within a democratic order. Psychologicily, education is termed as the process or activity which is directed at producing desirable changes of human behaviors. Based upon the Act number 20 year 2003 about National Educational System, education is defined as the conscious and planned efforts to create learning situations and processes

which are able to develop actively self-potential to make students have spiritual power, self-restrain, personal and positive behaviors, intelligence, and skills that they need in their society, nation, and state (*The Republic Indonesian Act/Undang-Undang RI*, 2003: 4).

Woolfolk (2009: 166) says that education is very important in this life, so all people need to be aware with no exception to children with special needs. They are the children who have a sophisticated problem, thus they need special educations to improve their potentials. One of the examples is physical disability. The Division of Student Support Services (1996) explains that a student with a physical disability may have any one of the followings: orthopaedic impairment (acquired or congenital physical motor impairment), cerebral palsy, spina bifida, muscular dystrophy, arthritis, congenital anomalies, osteogenesis imperfect, arthrogyrosis.

The physically disabled students in “SMPLB Negeri” Ungaran are those who cannot speak clearly because they have imperfect functions of their mouths. Besides that, they have problems with their legs because of problematic bones within, so they make them get little bit difficult to walk. However, they are still able to play football in their school particularly in physical exercises. They are also able to write. Even though their writing is not good enough but it still could be understood by others.

Writing is one of the four language skills that can be measured by the literacy development in a country; it also has not become entrenched yet, especially in Indonesia. The writing skill is regarded as the most difficult and complicated language skill because it requires the extent of perception and extensively involves thinking process. Disabilities in

writing are convinced by almost people because of the failure in teaching writing. A large number of researches show that so far, the teaching of writing only focuses on the theory of grammar or writing concept, but does not support students to write as many as possible. As a result, although the students get studied writing, but they only master the theory, proposition, or the principle how to write.

The major success of a writing teacher may stem from his or her ability to make and develop writing material, medium of learning, and appropriate strategy which suit with the students' need and interest. It means that writing teachers to be, must be taught well in making material, using appropriate media, and selecting the strategy which are used in the teaching learning process and motivate students to learn more.

Learning to write is not as the same as learning to speak which can be acquired subconsciously. Thus learning to write is considered to be more difficult than learning to speak. Therefore, students need to get something interesting when studying writing which makes them become more interested in the study of writing.

One of the writing genres taught to junior high school students is descriptive text. This is taught in order to make students know how to describe themselves and their surroundings although the description is still simple. The 8th graders of "SMPLB Negeri" Ungaran Kabupaten Semarang have difficulties in writing descriptive text because their teacher only explains about the definition of descriptive text without offering any strategies that are useful to master it. The teacher had better use the conventional method rather than using the other alternatives for the betterment of writing skill mastery. Secondly, students too depend

upon their imagination and do not have sufficient ideas to fully create complete description. Besides that, they are not able to recall and describe somethings in a systematic order beside incapability in describing parts, qualities, and characteristics of the things completely.

There are several alternatives to solve the previous problems. One of them is the use of realia in teaching writing in general and in teaching descriptive text in particular. The use of the realia plays an important role because students are able observe the real objects they are going to describe directly, so they can more accurately describe the objects in terms of their parts, qualities, and characteristics of these objects. Besides, this makes the study of writing more interesting.

Based on the research background above, the researcher is interested to do a research with a title: ‘Using Realia to Teach Students with Physically Disabled in Writing Descriptive Texts at the Eight Graders of “SMPLB Negeri” Ungaran in the Academic Year of 2012/2013 in the very basic skill. The researcher thinks that by doing this research, it can be referential and evaluation in teaching writing for the teachers and it can be a suggestion for the Educational Department to increase the quality of education system especially for physically disabled students.

Research Methodology

This is a qualitative research. Qualitative research is an approach to the study of social phenomena; its various genres are naturalistic and interpretive, and they draw on multiple methods of inquiry. Some characteristics of qualitative research are: take places in the natural world, uses multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic; it is

emergent rather than prefigured and fundamentally interpretive. Qualitative research has some purposes namely describing and reporting the creation of key concepts, theory of generation and testing. The focus of this research is to know the implementation of teaching descriptive texts by using realia for students in SMPLB Negeri Ungaran.

To explain such a kind of phenomena, the writer chooses a case study. Case study is the comprehensive explanation about some aspects of individual, group, organization (community), program, or social situation. In this study, the researcher wants to know directly the implementation of teaching descriptive text by using realia, the difficulties in teaching descriptive texts by using the realia, and the alternative solution for the coming problems faced by the eighth grade students of SMPLB Negeri Ungaran in the Academic Year of 2012/2013.

Discussion

Implementation of Teaching Descriptive Text by Using Realia

First Meeting

The first meeting was conducted on Friday-Saturday, April 27th, 2013. The teacher and researcher worked together to run on that meeting. The steps of the first meeting were:

- 1) Making a lesson plan
- 2) Preparing the teaching aids (the classroom; the form and content of the class used as the aids in teaching writing of descriptive text); the realia the teacher used was pen.
- 3) Preparing the observation sheet.

- 4) Explaining the material that would be taught. The purpose is: in order that the students understand the material exactly, focus on their attention on the learning situation, master the material, and enjoy the class.
- 5) Explaining the material. In this activity the teacher explained about descriptive text covering the definition and the example of the simple or basic descriptive text.
- 6) Showing the example of descriptive text and explaining the generic structure of the text using Indonesian language to make them comprehend the explanation because the students' ability is not as the same as the common students.
- 7) Asking students to describe the pen used at the first meeting.
- 8) Asking them to submit their work.
- 9) Explaining the purpose of the teaching.
- 10) Students conversed among others when the teacher extended material.
- 11) Students still did not pay attention and the teacher could not manage them when she explained the material.
- 12) Asking students to describe the realia without stimulating them to do so.
- 13) Students were confused to describe the realia (the pen) because she did not explain it before.
- 14) The teaching activity was ineffective and inefficient because the students were less interested in and did not comprehend the material given and there was no clear guidance how to do so.

- 15) The learning activity was ineffective and inefficient because students did not pay attention in teaching learning processes and misunderstood with the teaching instructions given.
- 16) The students' activity was ineffective and inefficient because they were less interested in using realia.
- 17) The students' writing result was still poor. There were many missing words because they did not know some vocabulary items.
- 18) The teacher wrote the descriptive text and showed it to the students. Then, she asked them to rewrite the example to make them understand the descriptive text.

The Second Meeting

The second meeting was conducted on Friday, May 3rd, 2013. The steps of the second meeting were as follows:

- 1) Arranging the lesson plan based on the teaching material
- 2) Preparing the teaching strategy
- 3) Preparing the teaching aids, the book used in teaching descriptive text.
- 4) Preparing observation sheets.

The teaching activities in meeting II was the same with the teaching activities in the meeting I, but there were improvements activities which were incomplete in the meeting I.

The activities were as follows:

- 1) Explaining materials, although they had been explained a day before.
- 2) Asking problems faced by students at previous meeting
- 3) Explaining and solving the problems

- 4) Helping students to translate the Indonesian difficult words into English
- 5) Asking students about their understanding realia given a day before
- 6) Showing realia (the book) which would be described
- 7) Asking students to observe the book
- 8) Asking students to write a descriptive text according to realia given
- 9) Guiding students in writing
- 10) Asking students to collect their assignment after finishing the task
- 11) Explaining the aims of teaching and motivating students
- 12) Showing the new materials which will be given
- 13) Explaining the materials clearly and more interestingly to the students.
- 14) Stimulating students by asking questions about things surroundings and then asking them to write
- 15) Searching students having difficulties in writing.
- 16) Encouraging students to self-confident to write.
- 17) The students' enthusiasm was developed indicated by their question on realia. If there were components that the students did not know, they asked the teacher about the meaning of them in Indonesian language.
- 18) The students understood the realia which would be described, because they observed more enthusiastically though they were difficult in knowing vocabularies
- 19) Students said that realia had helped them to know the vocabulary, because they did not need a long time to imagine and think the words which would be written.

- 20) The teaching was conducted effectively. The teacher showed the realia in front of them.
- 21) The students' activity in learning process was effective and efficient. They were more interested in observing the realia. They liked to know the elements or components of realia showed. A few students, however, still played with their friends and talked each other, because they thought that writing was very difficult and boring
- 22) Students asked the teacher about the meaning of difficult words. For example: Susilo asked the teacher "*Bu, bahasa Inggrisnya persegi panjang apa?.*" "Rectangular", the teacher said. However, a few students still got difficulties to write it and the teacher helped them to write on the board.

The Third Meeting

The third meeting was conducted on Friday, May 10th, 2013. The steps of the third meeting were as follows:

- 1) Arranging the lesson plan based on the teaching material
- 2) Preparing the teaching material
- 3) Preparing realia (oranges)
- 4) Preparing the sheets for observation

The teacher and her students accomplished the same activities with the second meeting. The activities in teaching learning process were as the followings:

- 1) The teacher explained about the material, although it had been explained on the day before.
- 2) The teacher asked the students about their problems on the previous lesson

- 3) The teacher explained the problem
- 4) The teacher helped the students to translate the Indonesia difficult words into English.
- 5) The teacher asked the students about their understanding of realia which had been given the day before.
- 6) The teacher showed realia (the oranges) which would be described
- 7) The teacher asked the students to observe them
- 8) The teacher asked the students to write a descriptive text according to the quality and all about its characteristics.
- 9) The teacher guided the students in writing
- 10) After the students finished their writing, they were asked to collect their writing to the teacher
- 11) The teacher conveyed the teaching purpose very well, and motivated to the students also very well.
- 12) The teacher's ability in transferring material was good enough.
- 13) The teacher explained the material clearly and more interestingly to the students.
- 14) Before the teacher asked the students to write, she stimulated the students by giving the question to them about the color and the shape of the oranges.
- 15) The teacher more paid attention to the students having difficulties in writing.
- 16) The students' responded the use of relia interestedly. Students said that realia was interesting.
- 17) The students understood the realia which would be described, because they observed more enthusiastically.

- 18) Students were sure that realia had helped them to comprehend vocabularies, because they did not need a long time to imagine and think the words which would be written.
- 19) The teaching was conducted effectively. The teacher motivated the students before she showed the realia in front of them. The teacher was more creative in showing the realia.
- 20) The students' activity in learning process was effective and efficient. They were more interested in observing the realia. They liked to know what the elements of realia showed. In this meeting, the students paid more attention to the teacher and they could write well though there were difficult words.
- 21) In this meeting, students asked the teacher about the meaning of difficult words. For example: Bayu asked his teacher "*Bu, bahasa inggrisnya bulat apa?.*" "Circle", the teacher said. The students were enthusiastic in the teaching-learning process, because the teacher more paid attention and gave motivation to the students having difficulties in transferring their ideas.

The Fourth Meeting

The fourth meeting was conducted on Saturday, May 11th, 2013. The procedures in this meeting were the same as that of the third ones. In that meeting, the teacher used the real things around the classroom.

The Difficulties and Problems Found in the Research

There were many problems found in this research. The first is the problems from the students; physically disabled students in SMPLB Negeri Ungaran have variation of characteristics. In the learning process,

the students showed different unique actions. There was a student who ran, slept, talked with others, was lazy to follow the lesson, played hand phone, etc. These activities were considered normal by teacher, because those are the natural part of their characteristics. In this situation, teacher got difficulties to control the class. The teacher sometimes had to stop the lesson to make them concentrate, or if they were very boredom with the material. Another problem in teaching writing of descriptive text for physically disabled students was about the ability to write. The physically disabled students are the students with problem on their physics; it means that they could not write fast, so the teacher had to teach them slowly. Their limited ability made the process of teaching learning run slowly.

Besides coming from the students, the problems also come from teacher. Quantitatively, the number of teachers SMPLB Negeri Ungaran is still limited so this institution still needs a lot of teachers to help students in the learning process. Even though limited, the educators in SMPLB Negeri Ungaran are skillful to control physically disabled students and other abled students because they have been long experienced in this world.

The other reality is there is only a class teacher who is responsible to teach all subjects in SMPLB Negeri Ungaran. Ideally, there must be a subject teacher in SMPLB Negeri Ungaran who teaches a subject based upon his/her discipline, for example: Indonesian department graduate should just teach Indonesian lesson, and the like.

Because the education process in the school is limited, the teacher expects the students to review the learning materials at home. To make the students more active in English, parents can apply habitual activities to their children to speak in English, although just short expression. It is

more ideal if the parents also provide video to help students to listen through audio visual media. It will be very helpful for teacher.

The next problems found are about the components of infrastructure tools such as learning media and classroom. The classroom size in SMPLB Negeri Ungaran is also limited; it is because there is a limitation of the quality of the students. Ideally, one classroom only consists of eight students, and besides that, there are no pictures as learning media. Learning media is one of the tools which can be used as the tool for transferring knowledge and value to the students so the learning process will run more effective. Teacher may use visual aids as pictures or audio visual as television, tape, video or learning tools. But in SMPLB Negeri Ungaran, the infrastructure tools are limited. There are only teacher-made pictures; while LCD and note book must be brought by teachers from home. For example: if teacher teaches the materials by using realia, he/she has to bring the realia from home because they are not available at the classroom.

However, the writer found one student who was enthusiastic to write. It can be seen from his questions related to the realia. The student asked the teacher about the meaning of words he did not know. He was Bayu. He liked asking the teacher about the difficult words. Conversely, Susilo looked very lazy to write, not because he could not write descriptive text but because of his problem with his leg in one hand and his right hand on the other hand so he got difficulties to write well. Beside that, Susilo also had less motivation to write. Bayu and Susilo were physically disabled students but intellectually they are the same as the common students. Their writing results were unorganized and there were also some missing words inside.

After the teacher assigned the students to write, the students were asked to collect the results. Then, she asked them the difficult words they found and translated into English.

From the problems found in each meeting, the writer concluded that the students had difficulties in exploring their ability in writing descriptive text, and in translating the Indonesia words into English. Thus, they still miss the words in their writing. Because of the problems found in this research, there should be an alternative solution to solve, namely the use of realia which will be explored in the next sub chapter.

The Alternative Solution to Solve the Problems in Teaching Descriptive Text by Using Realia

In this sub-chapter, the writer would like to describe and give the solutions from all problems found during the research in every meeting in the teaching learning. There are many problems found in this research. The main problem in this class is about the students that have limitation in their ability in writing because of their physically disabled, their background of their family, the teacher and learning media limited in the classroom; not many vocabularies showed so they were not able to translate Indonesia into English. The solution of these problems is that the teacher has to change their teaching, the students with physically disabled have to be taught slowly, the teacher has to repeat the lesson more than once, the teacher has to habituate them to open the dictionary in order to rich their English vocabularies. These will make them easily describe the things or realia in writing descriptive texts. By knowing many vocabularies, the students would not find out the difficulties in learning English lesson.

Besides opening dictionary regularly, memorizing the vocabulary is importance. The teacher should ask the students to memorize at least two new vocabularies every day. This practice will help the students to easily write, not only descriptive text but also others and by practising this solution, the students will be easy to speak in English language.

The alternative solution to the teacher is that he/she should teach subject based upon his/her discipline. For example: English teacher should only teach English, mathematics should be taught by mathematics teacher, etc. In addition, the teacher should add the teaching media to teach the physically disabled students, because it is better to teach them in real situation; so that is why the realia is suitable as teaching media for physically disabled students.

Even though, the tools which can be used in teaching writing are not only realia but also the other things inside the classroom; for instance: the pictures stuck on the wall, the audio visual, etc. Teaching physically disabled students is different from teaching normal students. It should be more slowly in order to make students understand. Repeatability is also important for students. By repeatability, the students will more understand about the material.

Besides that, physically disabled students need more exercises; so in this case, parents' action is needed. The parents have to ask their children to study at home. Monitoring by parents as a proponent of their children at home is needed. Through the parents' help the students could comprehend the materials given at the school. It could also be the alternative solution for many problems found at that school.

Conclusion

Based on the research result, the researcher could draw the conclusion that in the beginning implementation of realia, there were some problems faced by students such as difficulties to write the words because they did not know the vocabulary, are noisy during the class and afraid of asking the teacher.

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