IMPROVING STUDENTS VOCABULARY IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT BY USING WORD SEARCH GAME IN SMP

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengetahui seberapa baik kosakata siswa dalam menulis deskriptif teks. Penelitian ini adalah sebuah penelitian tindakan kelas yang dilakukan di SMP Negeri 2 Meliau dalam rangka memberi solusi terhadap masalah siswa dalam menguasai kasakata, khususnya untuk menulis despriptif teks sederhana. Proses belajar mengajar dilaksanakan dengan menggunakan "word search game" sebagai media untuk membantu siswa dalam mengatasi masalah mereka. Penelitian tindakan kelas ini dilakukan dalam 2 putaran dengan pertimbangan bahwa setelah 2 putaran dengan menggunakan word search game sebagai media, para siswa dapat meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata mereka dalam menulis deskriptif teks. Penemuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa nilai rata-rata tes siswa pada putaran pertama adalah 62,38 yang dikategorikan sebagai "rata-rata ke baik". Sementara, pada putaran kedua, nilai rata-rata siswa meningkat menjadi 80 yang dikategorikan "baik ke sangat baik". Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa dengan mengganakan word search game dapat membantu meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata siswa.

Kata kunci: **Word search game, media, kosakata**.

Abstract: This research was conducted to find out how good the students' vocabulary in writing descriptive text was. This Classroom Action Reseach was conducted in SMP Negeri 2 Meliau to give solusion toward the students problem in writing descriptive text. The teaching learning process were carried out by using "word search game" as the media to help the students to overcome their problem. It was conducted in two cycles with the consideration that by using word search game, the students could improve their vocabulary mastery in writing descriptive text. The research finding showed that the students' mean score of the test in the first cycle was 62.38 which was categorized "average to good". While, in the second cycle, the students' mean score increased up to 80, which was categorized "good to excellent. It shows us that using word search game could really help the students in improving their vocabulary mastery.

Key words: Word search game, media, vocabulary.

A lot of students still consider English as a very difficult subject to study. After study the language for years, they are still unable to perform well the four language skills, namely speaking, reading, writing and listening. There is one possible causal factor standing behind this problem, namely vocabulary acquisition. The students do not recognize a sufficient number of words. Therefore they fail in performing the four language skills satisfactorily. In conclusion, the mastery of a number of vocabularies is a requirement of English language acquisition.

It is the teachers' task to introduce as many words as possible to the students so that students manage to have a good command of English in a short period of time. Teachers must be creative and innovative in their task to teach their students. They have to think hard to find methods and media appropriate to the students' maturity. The methods must be able to guarantee the success of teaching and learning process. The teaching media that is going to be introduced also attract the students' attention. Thus the students feel interested to study the lesson vigorously.

When teaching and learning process is not successful, there might be something wrong with the teaching media and the teaching method which is applied. Students' boredom to the way of their teacher's teaching methodology might also bring about the students' failure in studying. The students might feel bored with the monotonous way of teaching done by their teacher. Consequently the students are uninterested in studying further the lesson given by their teacher.

The use of game might change the boring class activity into an interesting one. The students' interest to study a lesson might be higher through the use of game. Therefore, this might be another new alternative way of teaching which can guarantee the success of study. Games might enhance the students' motivation, interest, and concentration to study. So far, many teachers seem to ignore this important issue. Most teachers simply come into the class and do their routine and then leave the students after the teaching time is over. As a result the students go home without obtaining any new knowledge from the lesson that they have just studied.

This research is important to ensure the effectiveness of using "word search game" in the teaching of vocabulary to the junior high school students. If the fact identifies that the use of word search game is effective, then the researcher will suggest teachers to take advantage of this simple teaching media. The use of word search game can at least be used as the interlude to chase the students' boredom and enrich the variation of teaching media and strategy.

The researcher is interested in investigating the effectiveness of "word search game" in the teaching of vocabulary because the concerned game is not only easy to prepare but also economical in terms of money consuming. To make the word search game, a teacher simply needs a piece of paper and a pen. Then the teacher scrambles letters. The teacher needs only a little time, material and money to prepare the game.

The students of SMP Negeri 2 Meliau in academic year 2012/2013 Junior High School is adopted as the object of this research because they have been studying English since they are in the third grade. Besides that, the use of game as

the teaching media is more appropriate to the Junior High School students. The average age of the Junior High School students is 12 to 13 years old. At this age, they would rather play a game than study seriously. Thus the use of game might attract their interest to participate to play the game. Unconsciously, they are not merely playing the game, but they have been studying a lesson seriously and cheerfully through a language game.

The students of SMP Negeri 2 Meliau faced problem in mastering vocabulaty, especially for writing descriptive text. Therefore, this class room action reasearch is focused on findIng out how good is the students' vacabulary mastery by using "word serach game" as the media.

Teaching is a process carried by the teacher in the classroom, which is intended to transfer the knowledge and skill to the students. In the teaching of a language, the skills can be in listening, speaking, reading and writing. As Brown (2000:7) defined, "Teaching refers to showing or helping someone to learn how to do something, giving instructions, guiding in the study of something, providing with knowledge, causing to know or understand."

Moreover, teaching cannot be defined apart from learning. Teaching is guiding and facilitating learning, enabling the learner to learn, setting the conditions for learning. Furthermore, teaching involves teacher and learner in the process of close relationship or in other word, they cannot be separated. Therefore, teaching is a kind of personal relationship. If you want to teach Paul, it is not sufficient you know physics very well, but you should also know Paul equally well. Therefore, in order to achieve the goal of teaching, there must be a good relationship between the teacher and the learner and which is also hopefully supported by the environment.

Meanwhile, learning is a process of attempting to change behaviour through dynamic and creative way. As Kimble and Garmezy in Brown (2000:7) said that learning is relatively permanent change in a behavioural tendency and is the result of reinforced practice.

As we already know that vocabulary is fundamental to the mastery of all language skills because words are the smallest element of a sentence. Nobody will be able to perform English skill satisfactorily without mastering a sufficient number of vocabularies. One is unable to read with high comprehension, or to speak fluently without understanding of words meaning. In short the recognition of words are the fundamental aspect to be mastered for the first time.

Ur (1998: 60-62) stated that there are some aspects of vocabulary that should be mastered by students or learners, as follow:
a. Pronounciation and spelling;
   The students have to know what a word sounds like (its pronounciation) and what it looks like (its spelling).
b. Grammar;
   The grammatical rules should be understood by the students when they learn a set of new words.
c. Meaning;
   The meaning of word is primarily what it refers to in the real world, its denotation. A less obvious components of the meaning of an item is its

connotation, or positive or negative feeling it evokes, which may not be indicated in a dictionary definition. A more subtle aspect of meaning that often needs to be taught is whether a particular item is the appropriate one to use in a certain context or not.

Concerning the importance of word recognition, Nagy (1981: 1) argues: "Vocabulary knowledge is fundamental to writing comprehension, one cannot understand text without knowing what most of the words mean. Increasing vocabulary knowledge is a basic part of a process of education, both as a mean and an end. At the same time, advance in knowledge will create an ever larger pool of concept and words that a person must master to be literate and employable."

Junior high school student must recognize as many word as possible since the earlier stage. However the most important thing to be considered is the way of teaching the words so that the student will find it interesting. To achieve this purpose, teachers must take advantage the use of language games. Games can eradicate the student boredom. Through language games, students are unaware that they are studying the language.

According to Lee cited in Rahmanda (2009: 11)

- Games are a welcome break from the usual routine of the language class;
- They are motivating and challenging;
- Learning a language requires a great deal of effort. Games help students to make and sustain the effort of learning;
- Games provide language practice in the various skills-speaking, writing, listening and reading;
- They encourage students to interact and communicate;
- They create a meaningful context for language use.

A language game can arouse the students participation to take part in a game. It can also enhance the student interest to study an English lesson. They work together in a competition to win the game. Therefore, they study vigorously together with their friend in the game. They discuss seriously the answer to the given task given by their teacher.

Concerning the importance of the language game, Uberman (1989:310) argues,

"Games help uninterested student to take part in the class. One of the most important contributions of a game is that the student who have not done the work because of lack of interest, ability on some other reason become engrossed in the competitive situation. And they find themselves arguing about right or wrong answer as vociferously as those who have done work."

Games should be considered as the core of foreign language teaching, According to Lee cited in Rahmanda (2009) "Games are not just time filling activities but have a great educational value. Games should be central not peripheral to the foreign language teaching programme" Teacher should be

serious to prepare the game for students to study because it is important. A teacher must allocate particular time for this studying activity.

According to Richard and Amato (1988:147): "there are many advantages of using game in teaching activity. Games can lower anxiety, thus making the acquisition of input more likely. They are used the add diversion to the regular class activities, break the ice (but also) they are used to introduce new idea." When the students feel calm and relaxed to participate in the game, the game can bring maximal result. Hansen (1994: 113) also say, "Games enable learners to acquire new experience, the student feel delighted to participate in the studying activity. As a result, this game can be useful to activate the classroom atmosphere.

Writing on the other hand, as defined by Browne (2007: 81) is a complex activity which involves many skills. It includes deciding what one wants to write, how best to say it and how to put ideas onto paper in a way that is intelligeble to others. So it is then considered difficult by students let alone by those who are studying foreign language such as English. Heaton (1988: 135) also stated that the writing skills are complex and sometimes difficult to teach, requiring mastery not only of gramatical and rhetorical devices but also of conceptual and judgmental elements. Therefore, students may experinece difficulties in writing, such as in planning, writing and revising the text, communicating ideas, punctuation, and spelling the words.

In the teaching writing, the theacher has an importnat role. Langan (1991: 12) said that theache's role is to help students develop viable strategies for getting started (finding topics, generating ideas, and information, focusing and planning, structure and procedure), for drafting (encouraging multiple drafts of reading), for revising (adding, deleting, modifying and rearranging ideas), and for editing (attending to vocabulary, sentence, structure, grammar, and mechanics).

Writing is also one of the four essential language skills considered very important to be learned. It is the last skill to be taught in the sequence of skill in learning the language. Browne (2007: 81) defines the writing as a complex activity which involve many skills. It includes deciding what wants to write, how best to say it, and how to put these ideas onto paper in a way that is intelligible to others. According to Barli (1995:3) "to write means to try to produce or reproduce written massage". In addition, he states that writing is an act of putting together of words, and act of putting together sentences is surely the final objective of language learning. Robbing in Barli (1995: 5) says that the acquisition of certain mechanical abilities is the first-stage in writing skill, this includes the ability to put down on paper: words, phrases, clauses, and sentences, and also the ability to punctuate or capitalized the words correctly.

From the above opinions, the writer can conclude that writing is the process of producing message by putting down the expression of the idea into a paper. In other words writing is a process of putting together of words to form sentences and finally form a message into a composition.

METHOD

Based on the problem stated in the previous page, the writer conducted a Classroom Action Research where the writer paid more attention to the

development of the students' understanding of vocabulary during playing the game. The writer choosed a classroom action research as a method because she wanted to solve the problem which occured in the classroom. As Meece (2002:42) stated, "The goal of action research is not to understand general principles of children' development and learning but to understand a specific problem or to improve teaching practices within a specific classroom setting".

Action research is a process in which participants examine their own educational practice systematically and carefully, using the technique of research. According to Singh (2006: 261) "Action research is a method for improving and modifying the working system of a classroom in school." Moreover, Carr and Kemmis cited in McNiff (1992:2) stated that action research is a form of self reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in a social (including educational) situation in order to improve the rationality and justice of (a) their own social or educational practices, (b) their understanding of these practices, and (c) the situations in which practices are carried out. Then, according to McNiff (1992:2) "Action research is seen as a way of characterizing a lose side of activities that are designed to improve the quality of education; it is an essentially elastic way in to self-reflective program aimed at research educational improvement. Based on this statement, classroom action research is applicable for the research being conducted.

Action research has four stages that should be done as the procedures, as Lewin (1946, 1984) cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2005:234) codified the action research process into four main stages: planning, acting, observing and reflecting. The process of an action research based on Zuber Sterritt (1996) cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2005:232) is as follows:
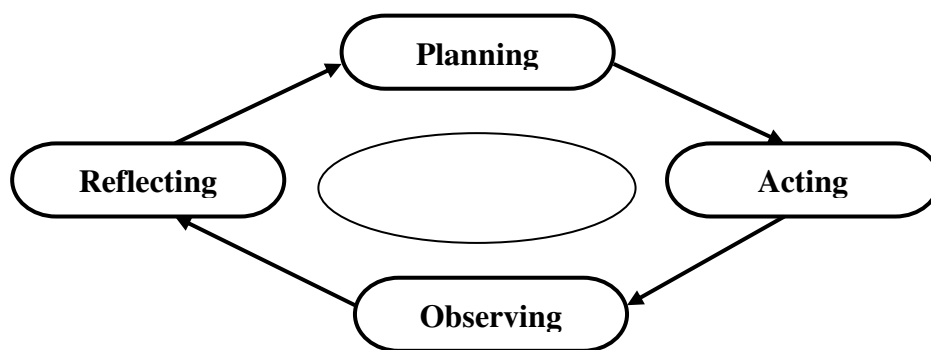
The appropriate technique of collecting data is very important to gain the objectives of this research. in this research, the writer used:
- Observation
  In this research, the writer with the help of collaborator took notes all that took place during teaching learning process by using observation sheets and field note. Here the writer and the collaborator wrote anything happened during the teaching learning process.
- Measurement technique

The writer used measurement technique through written test. The test was given after applying the treatment.

Tools of Data Collecting is as follows:
- Observation checklist table
  The writer kept the process of the activity in form of a note that recorded any action happened in the classroom when the game was played. Here, the writer with the collaborator really obseved anything happened in the classroom. (See appendix 1)
- Field note
  Field note was a note which was made to record the teaching learning process while the treatment was applied. It was formed in a table that contains of planning, action, observing, and reflecting. (See appendix 2)
- Written test
  In this research, the writer gave the students a written test. The test was in essay form. The test consisted of 20 items, one item was scored 5 points, and so all correct answers are scored 100 points. The test wwa given after the treatment.
- Handy camera
  In this research the writer used a handy camera to record the students' performance in playing the game. By recording the students' performance in playing the word search game, the writer hoped that it makes the writer easier to observe the students' performance. It was done during the students playing the game.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

To conduct this research, the writer applied classroom action reserach. This method of research was intended to solve the problem faced by the students in improving their vocabulary through the use of word search game. The students' problem during teaching learning process was lack of vocabulary mastery, pronunciation, and spelling. For example, in reading a text, the students only read the text but they could not understand what the text was all about, they could not understand the meaning of words they read. Let alone in writing lesson. The students found it very difficult to write and felt that writing the text was a very boring task to do, especially with regard to the use of words that they did not understand the meaning. They also found writing frightening. Therefore, the writer used word search game as the media to help them undertand the meaning of words they were reading and writing. This could also motivate them even to memorize the words.

This research was conducted in two cycles. During applying word search game as the media, the writer and collaborater cooperated to record the teaching learning process in the classroom through fieldnote. This was done in order to get the real data of teaching learning process in one hand and to avoid subjectivity of the writer during conducting the reseach. On the other hand.

The tool of data collecting was witten test. After giving the test in each meeting, the writer computed te students' score and clasified the mean score into

its qualification. The number of test was 10 items for each cycle, with the total correct answer of the test was 100. All the steps were done in order to obtain this reserach findings.

To compute the students' performance clasically, the writer used the formula of mean score. All individual score were summed and divided by the number of students in the class by using the following formula:

$$\bar{M} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

M = the mean score
X = the sum of the student's individual score
N = the number of student.

The qualification of students' mean score was classified by using the following criteria:

_____

Range	Qualification
80 – 100	Good to excellent
60 – 79	Average to good
50 – 59	Poor to average
0 – 49	Poor

The implementation of classroom action research was conducted through the followings:

1. First cycle
   a. Planning
      The writer planned to do the research on April 08, 2013. It was the first cycle in this classroom action research. The writer who acted as the teacher entered the class, then found the students' problem and tried to solve the problem. Before the teacher entered the class and taught the students by using word search game as teaching media, the teacher prepared a lesson plan to help her in teaching learning process. Beside a lesson plan, the writer also prepared field note to be used to write the teaching learning process. The lesson plan was constructed in such a way to make an effort so that the students get involved in the teaching learning process.
   b. Acting
      The acting stage was conducted on May 29, 2013. All activities followed the rules as written in the lesson plan. The teacher greeted the students, the teacher checked students' attendance and did brainstorming based on the topic. The teacher showed the picture to find out what the students know about noun. After showing the picture, the teacher asked the students to

mention names of the noun they know. The students looked enthusiastic to mention them.

In whlist activity, the teacher expalined briefly about my classroom. Then, the teacher prepared the reading text for the students. The teacher asked the students to read the text and find difficult words from the text. The teacher gave pictorial dictionary to help the students and asked them to find out the meaning of the difficult words. The teacher asked the students to read aloud the words and the meaning and then the teacher repeated the words and the students repeated after her. The teacher then gave the correctt pronunciation and translated the meaning of the things in the classroom. To see the students' mastery of vocabulary, the teacher asked the students to write names of things in the classroom as the exercise.

In post activity the teacher discussed the students' writing results and scored them in their worksheet.

c. Observing

In this first meeting, the students did not get good result. They still found it difficult to write the names of the things in the classroom. It can be seen from the scoring table. The mean score of students' vocauary was 62.38, which is categorized avarege to good.

To see clearly the result of the observation scoring table can be seen on table1 below.

Table 1
The Result of Students' Vocabulary Writing in the First Meeting

No	Students' Code	Score
1	AK	90
2	AAM	70
3	CVA	80
4	DMF	70
5	DHA	80
6	FEA	60
7	FFA	70
8	HPL	70
9	HS	40
10	KEK	60
11	KA	50
12	MM	40

13	MM	70
14	MM	50
15	MS	80
16	NCO	60
17	PSP	30
18	SAS	90
19	SHS	50
20	TWF	30
21	YL	70
	TOTAL	1310

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

$$= \frac{1310}{21}$$

$$= 62.38$$

d. Reflecting

Based on the discussionbetween the writer and the colaborator, it could be concluded that the first cycle was not satisfying. It means that the second cycle was waiting to be conducted. The improvement was as follow:

1). Teaching vocabulary should be in context and providing time in spelling and pronunciation the words have to be done better;

2). The avarage score of the test should be improved. The number of students who got less than 60 in their score should be minimized;

3). Students' weaknesses or lacking of vocabulary through word search game should be minimized;

4). To manage the time effectively, the teaching learning process should be based on:

- Pre-activity   10 minutes
- Whilist activity   45 minutes
- Post activity   25 minutes;

5). Give appropriate time to conclude the material.

2. Second cycle
   a. Planning

Based on the result of reflection in the first cycle, the writer and the collaborator found new problems. The problems were as follows:

- The collaborator suggessted that the teacher should ask unfamiliar words of the text for the students.
- The avarage score of the test in cycle 1 shows that 7 students got less than 60 points in their score. Therefore, the writer attempted to minimize the problems happened in the previous meeting. The writer prepared modified the lesson plan, teaching media, and field notes.

b. Acting

The acting stage was conducted on May 31, 2013. The teacher came into the classroom and greeted the students. Before starting the lesson, the teacher checked students' attendance. The were are asked to mention about names of noun in the classroom based on the topic "My Classroom". The students looked so enthusiastic to answer the question. Most of the students could answer the question well.

In the whlist activity, the teacher taught abaout "My Classroom. The teacher gave the exercise as evaluation. The students did the exercise well. After they had done the exercise, the students submitted their work.

In the post activity, the teacher asked about the students difficulty of the material. To close the meeting, the teacher gave the conclusion after of the lesson.

c. Observing

This was the time for both the writer and the collaborator discussed about the meeting. The result of discussion were:

(1) The students were more active in asking and answering the questiongiven by the teacher.

(2) The exercise was done wel and submitted on time.

(3) The avarage score of the test in second meeting was better. All the students individual score were more than 60 points.

(4) Based on the analysis, the students showed improvement of their mastery in vocabulary through word search game, including pronunciation and spelling.

To see the result of observation clearly the scoring table (Table 2) is provided below.

Table 2
The Result of Students' Vocabulary Writing in the Second Meeting

No	Students' Code	Score
1	AK	100
2	AAM	80
3	CVA	90
4	DMF	80
5	DHA	90

6	FEA	80
7	FFA	80
8	HPL	80
9	HS	70
10	KEK	70
11	KA	70
12	MM	60
13	MM	80
14	MM	70
15	MS	90
16	NCO	80
17	PSP	90
18	SAS	100
19	SHS	60
20	TWF	80
21	YL	80
	TOTAL	1680

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

$$= \frac{1680}{21}$$

$$= 80.$$

d. Reflecting

Based on the discussion between the writer and the collaborator after lookig at the result of observation, it can be concluded that the second cycle was satisfied. The goal of word search game to help the students mastering vocabulary was achieved.

This classroom action research had been conducted in two cycles. Each cycle consisted of plannig, acting, observing, and reflecting. The problems that happened in the fisrst cycle were as follow:

1) The avarage score of the test in the first cycle where 7 students got less than 60 points.
2) To manage the time effectively
   - Pre activity   (10 minutes)
   - Whlist activity (45 minutes)
   - Post activity   (25 minutes).

Because oh that to solve the problems, the teacher had to explain again about material "My Classroom" by using word search game as teaching writing media. Beside that, the teacher had to manage the time in order that the learning goals could be ccomplished well.

In conducting the second cycle, the students had mastered vocabulary better through the use of word search game. After observing the process an interpreting the data, the writer decided that the was stopped because the result showed that the indicators of success were fulfilled.

The research findings showed that the students' mean score in the first cycle was 62.38 and was qualified "avarage to good". In the second cycle, fortunately, the students' mean score increased to 80 and was qualified "good to excellent". This showed that the students' mean score had increased well.

Based on the result of field note, the use of word seach game as teaching media was so helpful for the students in improving their ability in finding wors meaning. In conclusion, the research findings of this classroom action easearch were satisfying.

CONCLUSION

Having conducted this research and based on the findings, the researcher conclude as the followings:

1) Based on the research findings, students' mastery in vocabulary had been improved by using word search game as teaching media. The mean score of the students in the first cycle was 62.38, while the mean score in the second cycle was 80.
2) This classroom action research was conducted in two cycles of its implementation. Each cycle consisted of the component of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. In the first cycle, the problem was the lack of students activity in answering the questions from the teacher and the lack of vocabulary mastery. In the second cycle, all of the indicators of lesson plan had been achieved.
3) The use of word search game as teaching media was helpful to minimize the students'problem of vocabulary mastery in writing.
4) Field note could help the teacher in identifying students' problems and helped the teacher in finding the solution and preparation for the next meeting in the teaching learning process.

SUGGESTION

Based on the findings and the above conclusion, the researcher propose the following suggestion:

1) It is suggested that the teaching may be implemented through classroom action reserach because it had been proved useful to help the students in increasing their score.

2) Teacher should be a problem solver to the students. Therefore, the teacher shuld always be ready.

3) It is suggested that the teacher may follow up the note of reflecting because it contains inputs to solve the students problem and can make the next cycle better.

4) It is suggested that the teacher to manage the time properly in order to complete all avtivities in teaching learning process.

5) Is it suggested that the teacher may give opportunity for the students to ask or answer questions and hep them to be active in the process of teaching and learning.

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