

IMPROVING STUDENTS' WRITING ACHIEVEMENT IN DESCRIPTIVE TEXT THROUGH QUANTUM LEARNING

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Abstract

This study deals with the improvement of the students' achievement in writing descriptive text through quantum learning. This study was conducted by using action research at second year of SMP N 1 Kabanjahe. The sample of this study was just one class namely: VIII-2. The number of this class was 36 students. The research was conducted in two cycles. Cycle 1 consisted of three meetings and cycle 2 consisted of two meetings. There were two kinds of data collected during the study, qualitative and quantitative data. The instrument for collecting the quantitative data was writing test while the quantitative data were gathered through interview, diary notes and observation sheet. Based on the writing test result, the students score kept improving in every test. In pre test, the mean score was 52, 61. In the test of cycle I, the mean score was 63 and the mean score in test of cycle II was 80. The conclusion is that quantum learning can improve the students' descriptive writing achievement.

Key words: Students' Achievement, Writing, Descriptive text, Quantum Learning

INTRODUCTION

There are four basic skills in English instruction at schools in Indonesia: speaking, listening, reading and writing. Based on the concept and function of English stated in the 2006 Education Unit Level Curriculum (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan: KTSP) for Junior High School (Sekolah Menengah Pertama:

SMP), the teaching-learning of English also has the purpose to develop the four language skills. Writing is one of four skills that will be discussed in this study. It was stated in Education Unit Level Curriculum (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan: KTSP) of Junior High School at grade eight that in writing students are expected to express the meaning of a short functional text and essay in the form of certain types of text. One of the texts introduced in this level is descriptive text. The purpose of descriptive text is to describe a certain object.

Byrne (2002:5) states that: many children, in fact, simply do not enjoy writing, partly because, out of the school, it has little value for them as a form of social interaction. Very few children succeed in becoming really proficient at writing and many cease to use this skill once they leave school.

Writing is very difficult to master. In the lights of the statement, we should, as foreign language teachers, be able to make certain assumptions, subject of course to cultural variations and to avoid making others. In reality, students' writing ability is very low. Based on the writer teaching experience during her Field Practice Programme (Programme Pengalaman Terpadu: PPLT) in SMP N 1 Kabanjahe, the students could not write well. It caused by some factors. First, the students are lazy to write because they do not have enough vocabulary, ideas and fact to write. Second, the students are lack of knowledge about the topic that they should write. Third, the students cannot organize their idea into good paragraph well. Based on the data that was got by interviewing the teacher, from 40 students in a class there is only 10% who are able to write a descriptive text, 30% in the middle level and 60% of the students are not able to construct a descriptive text.

Based on the situation, the writer thinks that it is very important to find ways to overcome the problem. One of the ways to solve the problem is by proposing a teaching model that suitable, effective, easy, interesting and helpful to the students. U.K Sing and K.N Sudarshan (1996: 98) states that an innovative teacher can adopt different strategies in making the environmental stimulating for the child to develop his skills of language. Some of these basic principles must be followed: (1) materials which are displayed in the classroom and provided for the use of child must be of the child's level and interest. They may include photographs, wall pictures, posters, and other raw materials which can be easily handled by the child. The child must have an easy access to these materials, the displays used in the classroom must be attractive, meaningful and relevant to the activities carried over in the classroom, (2) materials used for the class may be various kinds, such as paper, wood, clay and etc, (3) all the items in the classroom must be labeled in legible words, captions in the form of small sentences can also be used, (3) the space available in the classroom can be divided in different areas for the development of language skills, (4) a teacher has to present herself/himself a very suitable model for imitation in both speaking and listening, (5) teacher must try his/her best to provide encouraging stimulus and positive feedback. (6) the environment provided in the classroom must prove helpful for both the child to learn the skills of language and for the teacher for imparting experience in the actual use of the language.

So, according to the writer, one of the alternative models which might be able to solve the writing problem is Quantum Learning. Quantum Learning is a

comprehensive model that covers both educational theory and immediate classroom implementation. It integrates research-based best practices in education into a unified whole, making content more meaningful and relevant to students' lives. Quantum learning is about bringing joy to teaching and learning. It helps teachers to present their content a way that engages and energizes students. This model also integrates learning and life skills, resulting in students who become effective lifelong learners – responsible for their own education. (<http://www.newhorizons.org/strategies/accelerated/deporter2.htm>)

In addition, Sagita (2012) has ever made an experiment to find out whether Quantum Learning affects the students' achievement in writing. The result was it successfully affected the students' writing achievement.

Based on the explanation above, this study is aimed at improving junior high school writing skill by using Quantum Learning method.

METHODOLOGY

This research will be conducted by applying classroom action research (CAR). It needs an action research to overcome the problems faced in every teaching process. Wallace (1998:16) said that action research involves the collection and analysis of data related to some aspect of professional practice.

This study will be conducted by applying classroom action research. Wallace (1998:1) defined that action research as the systematic collection and analysis of data relating to the improvement of some area of professional practice. Action research is trying out an idea in practice to improve something. It involves

the collection and analysis of data related to aspect of professional practice. Its purpose is to improve school practices and at the same time improve those who try to improve the practices.

Classroom action research will be applied in this study because it will be used to see the improvement of the students' achievement in writing descriptive text through quantum learning. There are four steps in conducting action research, namely Planning, Action, Observation, and Reflection.

The research conducted on Academic Year 2012/2013 at SMP N 1 Kabanjahe, Jln. Jamin Ginting no 60 Kecamatan Kabanjahe Kabupaten Karo. The subject of this research was the second year students. The class chosen was VIII-2 that consisted of 36 students. The reason in choosing this class was the researcher found the problem in writing descriptive text.

In this research, the data will be collected by using diary notes, interview, observation sheet and writing test. The students are taught writing descriptive text by using quantum learning. There are three tests done during this research, they are orientation test, test cycle I and test cycle II. The test are conducted to measure the ability of the students statistically.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data were taken from only one class of State Junior High School 1 (Sekolah Menengah Pertama Negeri: SMP N 1) Kabanjahe. The class was VIII-2 which consisted of 40 students. But, 4 students were absent during the research. So, the writer took 36 students as samples.

There were five meetings conducted within two cycles in this research. The first cycle was consisted of three meetings and the second cycle as consisted of two meetings. The quantitative data was taken from the score of the writing test which was conducted at the end of each cycle. So, there were two writing test score which were taken for the quantitative data and also one pre-test score which was taken in the first meeting. The scores were taken by asking the students to write descriptive text. The result of the students' writing scores can be seen in the following table:

The Score of Students' Writing Test

No	Students' Initial Name	Pre-test	Post-Test Cycle I	Post-Test Cycle II
		Meeting I	Meeting III	Meeting V
1	AS	56	68	79
2	TA	58	81	86
3	RTC	70	81	90
4	WIC	58	63	83
5	FT	52	60	70
6	RA	56	70	78
7	ER	63	66	87
8	GT	55	59	74
9	SS	54	61	87
10	SAL	57	65	79
11	DVS	42	63	93
12	SN	47	53	75
13	GI	51	61	79
14	LS	46	79	86
15	YS	49	59	79
16	TRA	38	50	62
17	INF	61	65	85
18	DH	53	58	88
19	KW	49	55	68
20	TAW	50	60	90

21	IA	54	56	72
22	JK	62	68	88
23	AST	50	60	70
24	MET	46	50	82
25	JIP	52	61	74
26	NUS	52	60	81
27	DO	59	63	84
28	ADY	42	57	88
29	EN	54	73	82
30	NOS	48	61	73
31	SB	51	68	79
32	CBN	52	62	83
33	LE	57	64	74
34	VA	52	59	79
35	RI	58	65	76
36	AHK	40	52	80
Total		1894	2256	2883
X		52,61	62,66	80,08

There were 5 students (13, 8%) improve their score more than 30 points. This improvement is high because they were very enthusiastic during the teaching learning process. They always paid attention when the teacher gave explanation. They were so active during the teaching process and they got improvement in every test. Therefore, they got the highest improvement score.

There were 12 students (33%) who improve their score about 20-29 points. The steps of the quantum learning method helped them in understanding the descriptive text. They were serious during the teaching learning process. Although they did not get the highest improvement, their score also kept improving every cycle.

There were 14 students (38%) who improve their score about 10-19 points. Even though the students' score were not high level of improvement, it did not mean the students were not competent in writing. Some of them had a satisfying score up to 70 and some of them could not get score up to 70 because they were not serious during the learning process.

There were 5 students (13,8 %) who improve their score about 1-9 points. The score improvement of these students was not too high but some of them had achieved the standard score. They got lowest improvement because during the teaching learning process not all of them paid good attention to the writers' explanation and it seemed they had less willing to study.

The improvement of students' writing achievement in writing descriptive text could be seen from the mean of the students' pre-test (52,61), post-test in cycle I(62,66) and post-test cycle II(80,08). The data showed the students' improvement in writing achievement in descriptive text, which were taught by using quantum learning method.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

After analyzing the data, the writer found that students' descriptive writing improved from the pre-test to post-test of the first and second cycle. It means that there is improvement in students' mean score for pre-test (52,61); post-test cycle I (62,66), and post-test cycle II (80,08). The students' score continuously improved in each test. Therefore, it can be concluded that quantum learning can improve students' achievement in descriptive writing.

The result of the study shows that the use of Quantum Learning improves the students' writing skill. These are following suggestions are offered:

- a. It is advisable for English teacher to improve students' descriptive writing by using the quantum learning because it helps the students to enjoy writing process by the steps of quantum learning.
- b. It is suggested for the students to practice their descriptive writing by using quantum learning because this technique provide music, pictures and games that support the writing process, so the writing process will not be boring and hard.
- c. For all readers, may this study brings good understanding to the readers in helping them how to improve students' writing achievement by applying the quantum learning.

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