

The Effectiveness of Realia in Writing Descriptive Text: a Case of the Seventh Grade Students of SMP N 4 Semarang

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Abstract. This study is based on the research which attempted to examine the effectiveness of realia in writing descriptive text by the seventh grade students. The objectives of the research were (1) to analyze and find out the students' ability in writing descriptive text who are taught by using realia, (2) to analyze and find out the students' ability in writing descriptive text who are taught without using realia, (3) also to analyze and find out whether there is significant difference between students who are taught by using realia and those taught without using realia. Quasi experimental design was used with the population of 256 seventh grade students of SMP N 4 Semarang in the academic year 2017/2018. By using purposive sampling technique, there were two classes chosen as the sample of this study; vii a and vii b. The instruments of collecting data used were tests; pre-test and post-test. After the data were collected, they were analysed using t-test. The findings were as follows: (1) the ability in writing descriptive text by the students taught using realia was good with the mean of the post-test was 80.21. (2) the ability in writing descriptive text by the students taught without using realia was adequate with the mean of the post-test was 74.44. (3) there was significant difference of the two group students. $t\text{-test } 4.89 > t\text{-table } 2.00$. therefore, H_0 was accepted that realia was effective as a media in teaching writing of descriptive text.

Keywords: *realia, writing, descriptive text*

1. Introduction

In Indonesia, English is adopted as a foreign language. It becomes a subject in elementary school, junior high school, senior high school, and also higher education of institution. This is because of the situation we are facing now; the globalization era, which is very competitive era. In learning English, there are four skills to be mastered namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. According to Ivančić and Mandić (2014:3), receptive language skills include listening and reading because there is an input which is received by the learners,

while productive language skills include speaking and writing because there is an output as the product of their language learning. Most people think that productive skill more difficult than receptive language skills. In order to produce something such as written and utterance, people need more creativity and consideration to do. One of the productive language skill which will be discussed is writing. Writing is important in teaching and learning English; it requires some aspects such as organization, content, grammar, punctuation and spelling, and the quality expression which should be considered in producing written text

(Brown, 2003:243-245). In the division of language skills, writing is put in the latest level after listening, speaking, and reading but it does not mean that writing is not an important skill. Even, writing is a skill that many students consider it as the difficult part in learning process. It can be understood because many students have limited vocabularies that make them difficult to develop ideas into a piece of writing. However, writing ability is very important to be owned by the students because it can be an excellent communication tool. Through writing, each person will be able to convey feelings, ideas, and announcements to others. In addition, many people choose writing as a means of effective and efficient communication tool to be conveyed in some ways like posting letters, business letters, and important information of a product.

Students in Junior and Senior high schools are required to be able to write some kinds of genre in writing. According to Hyland (2008:544), the use of language to respond recurring situation can be represented by genre, therefore the writers realize that texts are useful when they employ conventions in a community. There are some kinds of genre in writing; they are narrative, recount, descriptive, report, procedure, analytical exposition, hortatory, anecdote, spoof, and news item. All of the writing genres have its generic structure, social function, and language features; therefore, they should be learnt by the students to improve their writing. In the seventh grade students of junior high school, there are two genres which are taught namely descriptive and procedure. Both of them have its generic structure, social function, and language features. In this research, it will be focused on writing descriptive text.

Descriptive is a text which describes what people or things are like. It can describe

about their physical appearance, personality, and behavior. Siahaan and Shinoda (2008:89) state that description is a text in which a concrete or abstract object is described by the writer. The generic structures of this text are identification and description. In addition, Oshima and Hogue (2007:61) state that if the reader can imagine the object, place, or person described, it means that the text is a good description. Regrettably, most of students in Junior High School are difficult to write descriptive paragraph properly and in accordance with the existing elements, both generic structure and language features in the descriptive text. The students had difficulties in writing descriptive text because the teacher only explained the generic structures of descriptive text and how to write it; there is no any new method or media the teacher used. Besides, the other difficulty aspects, they are lack of vocabulary, grammar, and spelling; the students also have less ideas in describing things orderly. All of the difficulties above are caused by the teachers' teaching method. They used to teach in plain explanation without giving any media or they only show picture on the screen of LCD (liquid crystal display), then teachers ask students to write descriptive text of the picture shown. Using traditional method in teaching is inappropriate in this day because the students are not interested in the learning process so that they are bored and less motivated. For the students of junior high school, writing descriptive text by seeing picture on the screen is insufficient to do. They will be in difficulty when attempting to express their ideas.

In order to solve the problem above, teacher needs to be more responsive in creating an interesting class so that the students will be motivated in learning English, especially writing. The new method of teaching is needed to improve the students' ability in writing descriptive

text; using media is the best way. Media in teaching descriptive text has important role to improve the students' ability in writing. Realia is expected to be one of media used in teaching descriptive text. It is a kind of imitation object, usually made of plastic which can be touched by the students so that they can express and develop their ideas. The use of realia might be a new media in teaching descriptive text for the junior high school students. Realia can help students in identifying an object or a person, including the shape, characteristic, taste or smell so that it makes them easier in writing idea. As the English teacher, the aim of using realia is to improve the ability of students in getting information about the object which is being described. Students might draw vividly on their mind about the information given. In addition, realia can be used as a new experience for the students in writing descriptive text.

Definition of Writing

Writing is one of the important skills of the other skills such as listening, speaking, and reading. According to Nunan cited in Alves (2008:2), writing is a sustained intellectual effort as a form of cognitive process in a period of time. Rahayu and Prayitno (2015:9) state that the other way to communicate with others is by writing it. Based on the theory above, to communicate with others is not always done in spoken way but also written. Furthermore, writing is an activity in which the writer might provoke language development and the accuration of language use can be focused on (Harmer, 2004:31). Meanwhile, Ur cited in Ivančić and Mandić (2014:10) states that writing is not only a way to express the idea and convey message to the readers, but also concern with the style used in writing.

Descriptive Text

According to Siahaan and Shinoda (2008:89), description is a text in which a concrete or abstract object is described by the writer. The function of descriptive text is to describe a

particular person, place, or thing. Warner (2009:6) states that descriptive text is a text which describing people, animals, and objects. While, Hyland (2003:20) states that imagined or factual events and phenomena which described in an account is descriptive text. In addition, a vivid mental that described in an account is kind of descriptive text (Longknife and Sullivan, 2012:25). In giving the score of the descriptive text, it will adopt from Brown ((2004:244-245) which there are five elements will be scored, namely organization; content; grammar; punctuation, spelling, and mechanic; style and quality of expression.

Media

Meskill (2002:11) states that something which effects or conveys something is called as medium – plural form of medium is media. While, according to Buckingham (2003:1-2), media which the plural form of medium are something used to communicate with other people indirectly; it is different with the definition of media education. He explains that media education play a significant part in live so that it should be understood and learnt. Media mean by which information is conveyed from one to other, also supporting in learning process. Using meda in the teaching learning process of English classroom is very useful in order to help students in understanding the materials.

Realia

According to Nunan cited in Oyarzo et al. (2008:24), the real objects which present meaningful examples of the world outside the classroom is called as realia. It is used in teaching and learning process to make students understand about the writer or speaker wants to write or say. While, Zukowsky and Faust cited in Oyarzo et al. (2008:24) state that realia is the equipment or concrete objects which is common in everyday life. Another definition about realia is the teaching of words by using real or lifelike items, for example plastic fruits (Harmer, 2001:140).

The implementation of realia is related to the natural approach; which creates a natural setting to the students (foreign

language) to help them in understanding words easily. Also, it can provide experiences of students with opportunities to use all the sense (sight, taste, hearing, feel, and smell) in learning. The only limitations in using realia are the size, quantity of the objects and the students' tolerance so that teaching students by using realia should be assessed based on the students' reaction. Therefore, teacher are demanded to be more creative in their teaching process.

2. Method

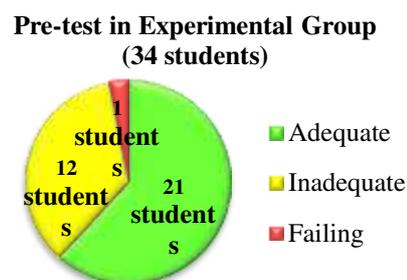
The design of this research was experimental quantitative research with quasi experimental design that used pre-test and post-test. There were two groups of participant in quasi experimental design; one group was given a research treatment while another group was not. The population of this research was the students of SMP N 4 Semarang on the seventh grade that consisted of eight classes. By using purposive sampling technique, there were two groups of sample chosen in this research; they were 7A and 7B. There were 36 students of 7A who became the control group and they were taught without using realia. While, there were 34 students of 7B who became the experimental group and they were taught by using realia (known as the treatment of this research). In this research, the researcher used a test as the instrument while the researcher applied one way to collect the data by using test. The test given were pre-test and post-test. After collecting the data, the researcher analysed the result of the test in order to know the students' writing ability before and after using realia.

3. Finding and Discussion

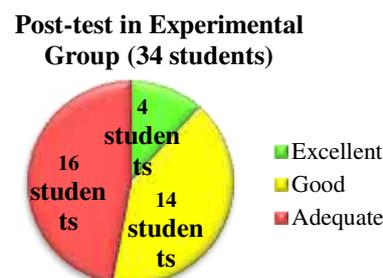
The subject of this research was the seventh grade students of SMP N 4 Semarang in the academic year 2017/2018. The researcher took two classes as the sample of the research which

were 7A and 7B. There were 36 students of 7A who became the control group and they were taught without using realia. While, there were 34 students of 7B who became the experimental group and they were taught by using realia.

According to the students' pre-test score in experimental group, the highest score was 77 achieved by one student. While the lowest score was 55 achieved by one student. The result of the pre-test in experimental group was shown on as follows:

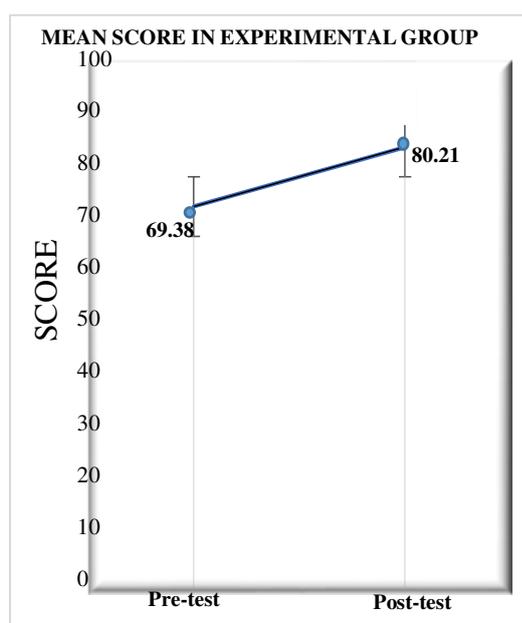


Based on the chart above, there were 34 students of experimental group in 7B class. The result of the pre-test was 21 students were in adequate category, 12 students were in inadequate category, and 1 student was in failing category. The mean score of the pre-test in experimental group was 69.38 and categorized into inadequate category. While, the result of students' post-test score in experimental group, the highest score was 92 achieved by two students. While the lowest score was 72 achieved by one student. The result of the post-test in experimental group was shown as follows:



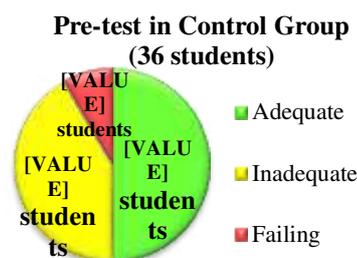
Based on the chart above, there were 34 students of experimental group in 7B class. The result of the post-test was 4 students were in excellent category, 14 students were in good category, and 16 students were in adequate category. The mean score of the post-test in experimental group was 80.21 categorized into good category.

The mean of the students' pre-test and post-test score in experimental group also presented in a chart as follows:



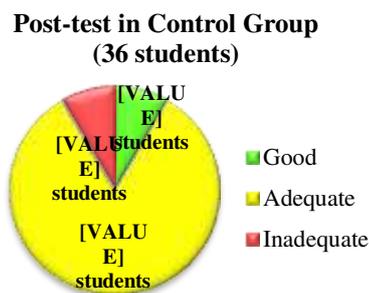
By comparing the result between the mean score of the pre-test and the post-test, there was an improvement by the score achieved, also the score category which was improved in two level; from inadequate to good category.

In the other hand, the students' pre-test score in control group, the highest score was 75 achieved by four students. While the lowest score was 42 achieved by one student. The result of the pre-test in control group was shown as follows:



Based on the chart above, there were 36 students of control group in 7A class. The result of the pre-test of 36 students was 18 students were in adequate category, 15 students were in inadequate category, and 3 students were in failing category. The mean score of the pre-test in control group was 66.64 and categorized into inadequate category.

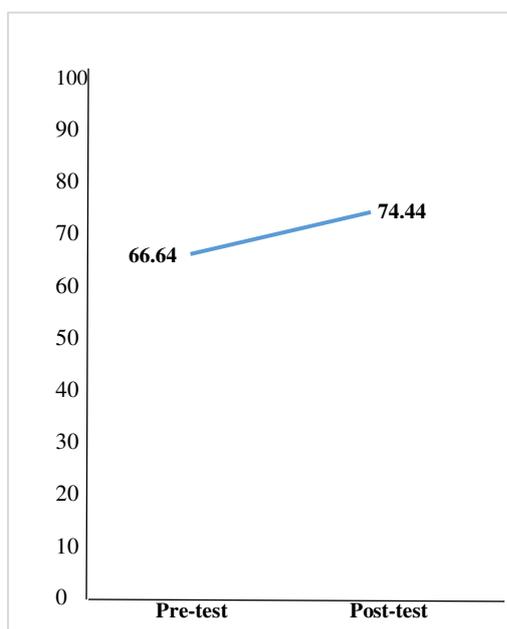
While, the students' post-test score in control group, the highest score was 83 achieved by one student. While the lowest score was 60 achieved by one student. The result of the post-test in control group was shown as follows:



Based on the chart above, there were 36 students of control group in 7A class. The result of the post-test of 36 students was 3 students were in good category, 30 students were in adequate category, and 3 students were in inadequate category. Despite there was an improvement of the students' score in the post-test but there were only three students who were in good category, three students who were still in inadequate category, and the rest was in adequate category. The mean score of the

post-test in control group and the result was 74.44 categorized into adequate category.

The mean of the students' pre-test and post-test score in control group also presented in a chart as follows:



By comparing the result between the mean score of pre-test and post-test, there was an improvement by the score achieved. The mean of the pre-test was 66.64 while the post-test was 74.44; and the score category rose to one level; from inadequate to adequate category. But, the post-test score was lower than the minimal score which has been set by school (lowest score from school => 65).

Based on the collected data, the students in experimental group had better result than control group. By getting the result in the research findings, it was found that there was significant difference of the students' writing ability who were taught by using realia and those taught without using realia. It was proven by the result of the post-test that the experimental group was 80.21 and the control group was 74.44. After doing some steps in calculating the data, the result of the t-value was 4.89.

Thus, the hypothesis was accepted by comparing the t-value which was higher than the t-table; $4.89 > 2.00$. Therefore, using realia as the media of the teaching process was an effective way to improve the students' ability in writing descriptive text.

4. Conclusion

Based on the research findings which had been analyzed in the previous chapter, the conclusions of this study were as follows:

1. The ability in writing descriptive text of the seventh grade students of SMP N 4 Semarang in the academic year 2017/2018 who were taught by using realia was good. In the pre-test, the highest score was 77 and the lowest score was 55, also the mean of the pre-test score was 69.38. While, the highest score of the post-test was 92 and the lowest score was 72 with the mean of the post-test score was 80.21. Furthermore, the category of the mean was also improved from inadequate to good category. Thus, there was significant improvement of the students' writing score; also realia was effective to be used as the media in teaching writing of descriptive text.

2. The ability in writing descriptive text of the seventh grade students of SMP N 4 Semarang in the academic year 2017/2018 who were taught without using realia was adequate. In the pre-test, the highest score was 75 and the lowest score was 42, also the mean score was 66.64. While the highest score in the post-test was 83 and the lowest score was 60 with the mean score was 74.44. Furthermore, the category of the mean was also improved from inadequate to adequate category but it was still below the minimal score of the school which has been set. Thus, there was no significant improvement of the

students' score in writing descriptive text by using conventionally teaching

3. There was significant difference of the students' ability in writing descriptive text who are taught by using realia and those taught without using realia. It was proven by the calculation of the t-test which the t-value was higher than t-table, $4.89 > 2.00$. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted that the students who were taught by using realia was better than those taught without using realia.

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