IMPROVING THE STUDENTS’ WRITING ABILITY BY USING WORD CARD IN DEScriptive TEXT AT SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS OF SMPN 2 GONDANGWETAN

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Abstract: Writing is one of the important language components in learning English. This research proposes to improve the students’ writing ability on descriptive text by using word card for seventh grade in SMPN 2 Gondangwetan. This research used Classroom Action Research (CAR), the researcher as an actor and the teacher as the observer. It is done through two cycles, each cycle has four steps: plan, implementation, observation, and reflection. The media used here were colorful word card about adjective word. The instruments that used are interview, observation, questionnaire, documentation, and test. The researcher found that the use of word card can improve the students’ writing ability on Descriptive text. It could be seen on the students’ score in each cycle. The score table in cycle one showed that 63% of the students got the criteria of success. And it was increased to 88.5% of the students who was succeed in cycle two. Finally, it can conclude use of word card can improve the students’ writing ability on descriptive text. The researcher suggest to the teachers English for applying word card as teaching media to improve the students’ writing ability especially on Descriptive Text.

Key Word: Writing Ability, Descriptive Text, Word Card

INTRODUCTION
English as an International language which becomes more important not only as a means of communications but also as a media to transfer sciences and technologies. The English teaching and learning process is open to any developments in teaching and learning methods and materials. There are four skills that should be best learned as a basic in students in learning languages especially English. There are Listening, Speaking, Reading, and the last is Writing. Writing skill is an active or productive skill because it produces a product. Wiley (2006) states that writing is a medium of communications that represents language through the inscriptions of signs and symbols. According to the curriculum KTSP 2006, the standard competence of learning English especially in writing and the basic competence of writing in the second semester is expressing meaning and rhetoric step in simple short essay by using written language accurately, fluently, and acceptably to get interaction with surrounding environment (Depdiknas, 2006). The once of the text above is descriptive text. According to Rohman (2013:15), the descriptions usually consist of first, identification which this part identifies the thing or person being described.

The researcher is interested to choose class VII A students in SMPN 2 Gondangwetan, with consist of 35 students, they are 22 male students and 13 female students in academic year 2014 - 2015. It is because they have problems in writing activity like: (1) they are difficult to construct the main idea per paragraph, (2) the students write text by using Bahasa Indonesia then they try to write using English and to appropriate grammar to use, and (3) they had low motivation in learning. This information based of the informal interview to the English teacher. Based on the problems above, the researcher plans to improve the student’s writing ability by using word card at SMPN 2 Gondangwetan. Word card is
word in a card. Word card usually used to give practice in syllable recognition to give practice in word building (Kasbolah and Yuswotono, 1999:34). So many kind of word card. According to Ashoori (2011), word card should be about 15x7 cm. The researcher uses word card as the media of learning. The word cards contain of adjective of human characteristic. It has several kinds of colors to differences kind of the paragraph that students developed. Every color explains about what kinds of characteristic of person is tell about. The advantages using word card are for the students, they will easy to memorize the word, get new vocabulary, interest and create the curiosity that will make student want to know. Teacher also have advantages from using word card in teaching writing, they will have practice method and media in teaching learning process and it is easy to apply to the other materials.

It is supported by Fisher (2000), Learners process word and making connections between what they already learn and what they have learned. Personalizing a word depends on making semantically meaningful connection between learners’ schema and what they have recently learned. It is supported by Hulstijn (2001), that learner is more affective using visual media as the delivery of the material.

In this research, the researcher hopes to help the English teacher can served as a feedback for the improvement of teaching writing in descriptive text especially in SMPN 2 Gondangwetan, and the Future Researcher, as motivation them to make a wider research and find new strategy in writing skill. To avoid misunderstanding that the reader may have, the writer will give the definition of the key terms as follows: (1) “Writing ability” is the student's ability to write and describe a person for the seventh grades of SMPN 2 Gondangwetan, (2) “Descriptive text” refers to kind of text made by the seventh grade of SMPN 2 Gondangwetan which describes a person, (3) “Word card” is a card that contains word, especially adjective about person appearance. The researcher also has studied the previous studies. One of them was written by Rohman (2013) who conducted a study entitled “Improving Students’ Accuracy in Writing Descriptive Text by using Color Cards at the First Grade in SMP Negeri 1 Sumberasih, Probolinggo”. He concluded that the student’s accuracy in writing descriptive text improved through color cards. It was improved by the improvement in the result of the post test in each cycle. It was because color card make students easy to write descriptive text, it also interest the curiosity of the students to learn more about writing descriptive text. There was one more that come from Abdurahman (2011) in his unpublished S1 thesis which has title “Using Colorful Jumbled Word Card to Improve Student’s Simple Present Tense in Writing Descriptive Text at SDN Kebonsari” which studied about how colorful jumbled word card can improve the students’ simple present tense in writing descriptive text of the sixth grade. The students’ learning writing process was improved through the use of colorful jumbled word cards and it made the class more active. The differences between two of the researcher before, this research the kinds of word card that used are adjectives to develop the main idea of the paragraph about characteristic of the person. So it was quite different than Rohman’s research that use word card to make the whole sentences and also Abdurahman’s research that use word card in kinds of form to arrange simple present tense sentences. Based on the background of the study, the purpose of the study is to know how the use of word card can improve the students’ writing ability in descriptive text.

METHOD

In the teaching and learning process on the students’ writing ability by
using word card, the researcher chooses classroom action research. According to McNiff (in Yaqin, 2003: 22), the action research is problem solving that conducted by the researcher or the other who involved in the research unity. There are some procedures that must be passed through by researcher in conducting this method. McNiff (in Yaqin, 2003: 23) described these procedure as continuum activity like spiral which each activity consist of four steps, there are planning, action, observing and the last is reflection. The subject of the study is the seventh grade students of the second semester in the academic year 2014-2015, and the setting of research in SMPN 2 Gondangwetan, Pasuruan. The researcher focused to the seventh grade in 7A. There were 35 students which consisted of 22 boys and 13 girls. In order to collect the desired data, the researcher applied some 5 instruments. The first is Interview, it is a meeting in which the researcher asks some questions to the English teacher to get more information, which is required in preliminary study. This is One-on-One and Open-Ended Interviews. According to Creswell(2012), One-on-One and Open-Ended Interviews are individual interview to the English teacher. It was conducted on Monday, April 27th, 2015. The second, the researcher used observation role of a participant observer where the researcher took a part in teaching and learning process and the students became the object of the study and it form of field notes. It was conducted in every first meeting in every cycle on Tuesday, April 28th, 2015 and Tuesday, May 04th, 2015. It was held by the collaborator when the researcher taught the students as the English teacher. The third is test, Handani(2009) stated that written test is a manner to know the successful or not teaching learning activities. The researcher used it as the instrument to determine the students’ ability. It was held on Saturday, May 02nd, 2015 and on Saturday, May 09th, 2015. The next is questionnaire according to Creswell(2012), that questionnaire is an instrument used to get data of students’ response in the researcher’s material and method in teaching and learning process by giving a set of written questions. Questionnaire is conducted on Saturday, May 09th, 2015. It was held in the last meeting in cycle 2. The last instrument, the researcher used documentation as an instrument to get data or information more accurate to be approved. Creswell(2012) stated any information that could provide context and clarity to a secondary user should be provided. The documentation contains the list of students’ name, the students’ score and photo of students when the teaching learning process happen. The researcher observed as a teacher on Monday, April 27th, 2015. After all of the instrument finished, The classroom action research that consisted of two cycles were done in four meetings.

The research procedure is one of the primary things to conduct it. The researcher starts the research with the preliminary with interviewing the English teacher. It was done on Monday, April 27th, 2015 to identify and find out the problem in teaching and learning activities. In relation to the application of the strategy through action research, the researcher makes a preparation prior to the implementation of this action based on the result of the preliminary of study. At this stage, the researcher prepares: (1) material, In doing the research, the researcher and the collaborator prepare the materials which are relevant to the topic for the first grade students of junior high school. The material in this research are taken from hand book and LKS of first grade at SMPN 2 Gondangwetan and selected by the researcher. The materials are about descriptive text (describing person). Some tenses are related to its function of the descriptive text. According to Stave (2011), descriptive text is a text which says what a person or a thing is like. (2) media,
they are word card as the media which is designed by the researcher and related to theme. Word card in this research is a card that contain of adjective and has some different of color designs. (3) lesson plan is designed on the purpose of equipping the teacher with a guide line in implementing the strategy in teaching and learning activities.

The teaching and learning activities are conducted in three phases: pre-activity, main-activity, and post activity. (4) criteria of success, the researcher made two the criteria of success. First, at least 75% of the 35 students get score equal to or more than 71 based on the KKM of SMPN 2 Gondangwetan. The researcher used this score, because it is the standard of minimum score for writing ability in “Descriptive text” material. According to a Brown (2007: 391), to reach the score, the students have to pass some components of the writing test required. The components are content, organization, vocabulary, and grammar. In this research, to find out the average score the students; writing ability test. Second, by analyzing the questionnaire of the students, at least 75% of the 35 students have positive response to the use of word card in teaching writing. The researcher shows the word card that contain adjective based on the person who will be described, it can make the students to be more interested in learning, it also can to be easy for the students to get the main idea for every paragraphs. The researcher creates the good atmosphere in the class and makes the students more active in learning through discuss in group. These criteria of success are used to identify if the students’ writing ability has been improved through word card, as well as to decide whether or not another cycle is necessary. Next, the researcher implement the preparation.

The implementing of the action research is carried out by the researcher and it is helped by a collaborator who observes the student’s involvement in teaching learning process. In all cycle, the researcher conducted the teaching and learning activities based on the lesson plan prepared. If the result of teaching and learning activities in cycle one does not reach the criteria of success, the researcher will change or revise the lesson plan or the teaching and learning material. It was done in cycle two. Observation is carried out by the researcher and her collaborator while implementing the action. They record and collect data about aspects or events which is happening during the implementation of the action. The researcher apply some instruments such as observation by field notes, and questionnaire in order to get data related to using word card in improving students’ writing ability through descriptive writing activity. The last is reflection. In this reflection phase, the researcher and the collaborator analyzed the data which is collected from instruments which are administrated during teaching and learning process. The result of analysis was used to make a conclusion and decision whether or not the researcher is success. If the action of cycle one is not success, the following cycle will be conducted by revising and developing some items to make the next cycle effective. Based on the collect data, the analysis is administrated on both the quantitative (the students’ score of their writing activity) and qualitative data (the students’ response toward the implementation of word cards).

FINDING

The findings of the research presented here were the data gained from field note, the test, and additional instrument in cycle two in the last meeting was the questionnaire. In this research, the researcher conducted the activity consist of two cycle, and the cycle consisted of two meetings. Therefore in this activity were done about four meetings. The time allocation of each meeting was 80 minutes (2x40 minutes). Cycle one was carried out on April 28th 2015 and May 02nd 2015. The researcher acted as the teacher who
was applying the word card in teaching descriptive writing. Meanwhile, the collaborator helped the researcher applied five instruments to gather data, namely format of interview, test, field notes, questionnaire and documentation. As the planning, the researcher prepared the teaching by choosing material, preparing material, media and lesson plan as follows. First, the materials in this research were taken from syllabus and lesson plan and selected by the researcher. Second, the researcher also prepared word cards as the media which were arranged by the researcher and related to the theme (person). The last was lesson plan, the researcher prepared a lesson plan for guiding the teaching. The next is the instructional goal which is aimed at being able to improve the students’ writing ability through word cards in constructing descriptive text and developing short functional text in the form of descriptive to describe person. The next is the procedures of the teaching and learning process. The last is the sources which were taken from the book for seventh grade and the researcher test made.

**Cycle one**

Cycle one had been done on Tuesday, April 28th 2015 and Saturday, May 02nd 2015. In the pre activity, the researcher gave greeting, checked the students’ attendance, made interpersonal discourse based on the material that were presented, and explained about the objective of the lesson. In whilst activity, the researcher shared the word card. Teacher gave five minutes to students to look for the meaning of the word card. The researcher gave example how to arrange the word to be sentence. The teacher also explained simple pattern in present tense shortly and simply. Then students did the instruction from the researcher, but the students were still embarrassed to write on the blackboard. In the post activity, the researcher gave summary about the lesson as a feedback and discussed about the students’ difficulty in the given material. Meeting two was conducted to continue the action of the research that has been done in meeting one. The teaching and learning process in this meeting were also divided into 3 activities, pre, whilst, and post activities. It was carried on Saturday, May 02nd 2015 at 8.40 am until 10.10 am. In the pre activities, the researcher greeted, and checked the students’ attendance. In whilst activity, the researcher showed the three example of word card and how to arrange be a paragraph. After all of the students understand well about how to make paragraph, the teacher asked them to make two paragraphs consist of identification and discussion. All of the students had done the task but there were some students that had done quickly and slowly and the result of the task were still miss in grammatical rule. Twenty eight students finished in 25 minutes, but the seven students finished over 30 minutes. In the post activity, the researcher gave summary about the lesson as a feedback and discussed about the students’ difficulty in the given material. The researcher reviewed the material of descriptive text and gave the feedback to the students about the progress of the success study.

The meeting of cycle one was still considered ineffective due to some weaknesses as found in the implementation of this action during the teaching and learning process. The field note was an instrument for assessing students’ attitude toward the implementation of word card in first meeting in every cycle. Reflecting on the result of the data analysis in cycle one, the researcher came to the conclusion that the scores of the students’ writing ability were greater than or equal 71 achieved by 75% of the students, had not been achieved yet. There were only 68% of the students who scored equal to and/or greater than 71. The highest score is 94, the lowest score is 50, the mean of the students’ score is 75. Because of this unsatisfied result, the researcher decided to conduct another
cycle by doing some revision, particularly in terms of technique which was not well managed.

**Cycle Two**

Cycle two was carried out in two meetings as the same with cycle one. It was conducted on Tuesday, May 04\(^{\text{th}}\) 2015 at 10.40 am – 12.00 pm and Saturday, May 09\(^{\text{th}}\) 2015 at 8.30 am – 10.00 am. Similar to cycle one, the word card was implemented in the first and second meeting. The researcher acted as the teacher who was applying the word card in teaching descriptive writing. And the collaborator helped the researcher to manage and handle the students during the teaching and learning process. In the pre activity, the researcher gave greeting and checked the students’ attendance. In whilst activity, the researcher gave a brief explanation about describing other person. The researcher asked to make a group pair work with his/her table mate. The researcher asked the student to discuss with their pair mate to discuss about their each characteristic. In the post activity, the researcher gave feedback and discussed about the material that had been done. In meeting two, it was conducted on Saturday, May 09\(^{\text{th}}\) 2015, 8.40 am – 10.00 am. In the pre activities, the researcher greeted and checked the students’ attendance.

The researcher reviewed about the previous material of descriptive text. In whilst activity, the researcher reviewed again explanation about describing person clearly and was same theme like last meeting, the topic was describe other person. The researcher wrote down the example of describing person and explained content of each paragraph and what the main idea of the paragraph. The researcher explained how to make descriptive text to the student. The researcher also discussed the main idea in every paragraph. The researcher asked the student to make three paragraph of descriptive text about their best friend as the final test in last meeting about describing person. The researcher gave 25 minutes to write down their task in the work sheet. In the post activity, the researcher gave summary about the lesson as a feedback and discuss about the students’ difficulty in the given material. In the cycle two, the researcher more paid attention to what happened along the teaching and learning process.

Comparing the result of the students’ writing skills by the end of cycle one and that of cycle two, the researcher found the score of writing skills increased significantly. The percentage of students’ success in mastering English especially in writing skills moved up from 63% to 88.5%. This result of the analysis indicates that the revised actions in cycle two were useful to increase the students’ writing skills. Generally the students were active and the teaching learning activities run well until this meeting. The revision of the media had almost fulfilled the criteria of success, although some of them (four students) still had problem to reach criteria of success. The spelling of the students was better than cycle one because they got help from the researcher and almost of them brought dictionary. Based on the result of the questionnaire, it was surprisingly found that the percentage of the students had positive responses toward the implementation of the word card was great.

The result of the questionnaire was supported by written accounts documented on the field notes. The good points of the teacher were that the teacher provided more feedback about how the way to construct a good paragraph to the students, so that it reduced their problem in writing process. The teacher and the students discussed and shared about the students’ difficulty, in building their idea and constructing the good paragraph. After observing and conducting in the cycle two, the researcher compared between cycle one and cycle two. It got increasing in cycle two. The students’ writing skills gradually increased. In the cycle one, there were only 22 out of 35 (63%) students who scored under predetermined criteria.
After conducting the cycle two, the number of the students who got score under the predetermined criteria was 31 out of 35 (88.5%) students. The highest score is 100, the lowest score is 62, and the mean of the students’ score is 81.

Based on the result of questionnaire which consisted of five questions, the research showed that the students’ attitude toward the word card was good. These points obviously indicated that the research had met the criteria of success and, therefore, the final conclusion could be drawn, i.e. that the use of word card was successful to increase the writing skills of the seventh grade of students of SMPN 2 Gondangwetan. It because of the progress of the students’ activities in cycle one until two that the students learned the writing ability of descriptive text by using picture in individual or pair work.

DISCUSSION

The discussion is based on how the word cards can increase the students’ writing skills. In teaching writing of descriptive text for seventh grade students of SMPN 2 Gondangwetan, firstly the researcher showed the word card as a media to teach descriptive text. Then the researcher gave used word card as vocabularies that related with the picture. After researcher showed the media and explained about descriptive text, the researcher gave the task to make a descriptive text. According to Schacter (2003), descriptive text is fun and it makes students’ writing more interesting to readers because the students use their words to help readers “see” or to visualize of people, places, or things. While the result of the test at the end of the cycle one showed that there were 13 students who got under 71. It was not successful because it was still below the criteria of success, which required at least 71 as minimum score. In writing, the students have to pass some components of the writing test required as stated by Brown (2007).

The components were content, organization, vocabulary, and grammar. In cycle two, the researcher also changed the technique of teaching. When the researcher gave a task to the students, she gave it into pair works to discuss in order to overcome the students’ problem in writing process. The discussion helps students to understand the material more quickly. Beside that the researcher give line writing to help the students arranging a paragraph in writing. To sum up, based on the reflecting of the cycle two, the students’ skills of writing descriptive text was improved. It is shown by the writing score of the test from the first and the second cycle. In the cycle two, there were 88.5% (31 out of 35) students who got at least or more 71. It can be concluded that most of the studentst achieved the minimum standard score. The findings also confirmed that 100% (all of the students) were actively involved in the teaching and learning process, especially in the cycle two. The students were successful in involving the teaching and learning process. They enjoyed in writing process. It meant that the use of word card could increase the students in learning English, especially in writing skills. These second cycle had good points in score of the students than the first cycle. In cycle one, the researcher taught the basic of descriptive text and then the students could understand but it was not better than cycle two. In cycle two, the researcher taught the descriptive more detail and specific, so that the students were more understood in learning writing.

CONCLUSION

The researcher concluded that the students’ writing skills in descriptive text of the seventh grade of SMPN 2 Gondangwetan can be improved through the use of word card. There were progresses of score in writing ability by using word card. The result of the research is the students’ writing skills improved gradually. In cycle one, there were only 22
out of 35 (63%) students who scored under predetermined criteria (71). Then, after conducting cycle two, the number of the students who scored under predetermined criteria was 31 out of 35 (88.5%) students. The students also had positive response to the use of word card. It is showed that the students’ attitude toward using word card is good, the students who were categorized to have positive attitude, there are average percentage of the students who chose A is 94.8% and 5.2% who chose B in cycle two. Based on my research, this media of word card should be good option for the students’ learning. The suggestions were addressed to the English teachers and the future researchers. First, for the English teachers, the implementation of word card suggested to apply it in the teaching English in writing activity. It also increased the students’ motivation during the class activity which felt boredom and also made them easy to spelling the word and minimalize the error written. Second, for the future researchers, it was as a consideration for them in conducting a similar study on the differences skill and the similar problems to strengthen the present findings.

REFRENCES