REVIEWING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS FOR WRITING SKILL

Dini Puspitawati
Lecturer of English Department, Akademi Bahasa Asing (ABA) Tarakan, North Kalimantan
dinipuspita_wati@yahoo.com

Abstract: Writing often involved a question why writing is important but complex, and difficult to be learnt. It is important because it becomes one of the type communication in modern era, but it is difficult in the process of producing one. One strategy to write well is to use graphic organizers. Graphic organizer is a tool in attempting students to ease them to build on paragraphs by using charts, diagrams, or other type of organizers. It usually occurs in the prewriting strategy phase. This paper is intended to describe the effectiveness of graphic organizers based on the review of related literature. Some studies are presented in related to the effectiveness of graphic organizers. One of them is by using hamburger paragraph. The result of the reviewing the literature shows that graphic organizers are effective to improve the students' writing.

Keywords: Graphic organizer, prewriting strategy, writing skill

Writing is as an important part of English skills. That is why learners must be able to master it. Wallace., Stariha., & Walberg (2004) states that writing, speaking and listening are communication skills that are important in all subject areas in the curriculum. Zemach & Islam (2005) say that writing is an important form of communication in day-to-day life, but it is especially important in high school and college. To master this skill, the learners are suggested to write in their daily life as in communication such as writing a personal experience, a letter, and so on in order to help them to have habits in writing. Although writing is one of the most difficult skills to master in both a first language and a second language, it is still taught to the learners. Harmer (2004:31), states writing (as one of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing) has always formed part of syllabus in the teaching of English.

Furthermore, there is a reason why writing is difficult and complex. It is all because writing is not only about attentioned to the aspects of writings but also the language used to express ideas. In other words, writing is both very important and difficult. In writing, ideas must be organized. There are also spelling, mechanics, punctuation, grammar, accuracy, the topic or theme, choice of words, organisation, purpose, audience, clarity, and language, cohesion, coherence and unity that should be thought about. The reason why writing become complex had been supported by Harmer (2007). He states that, in reality, the writing process is more complex because there are various stages in it, such as drafting, reviewing, re-drafting and so on. That is why it is called writing is a process. Writing involves a process how to write. Writing process is very helpful for the students to know the stages of process. Harmer (2004) states that writing process is the stages a writer goes through in order to produce something in its final written form. Therefore, writing is a very complex activity. This paper is intended to describe the effectiveness of graphic organizers based on previous studies.

DISCUSSION

The discussion part present the definition of graphic organizers and the review of related literature showing the effectiveness of this pre-writing strategy.

Graphic Organizer

Graphic organizer is one of writing tool in organizing some ideas that will be organized in writing. Parker (2007) states that Graphic organizers are visual representations that help gather and sort in-
formation. They help students see patterns and relationships between the given information. With only a few words, concepts are clarified, information and ideas are organized, and complex relationships are shown between the elements. Graphic organizers are referred to as maps because they help “map out” ideas in a visual way. Graphic organizers have many names, including semantic maps, webs, concept maps, story maps, and semantic organizers. Some examples of commonly used graphic organizers include spider maps, Venn diagrams, T-charts, and KWL charts. Perhaps the most widely used graphic organizer is the calendar. Calendars are used to sort, sift, record, and share information.

According to Smith & Kay (2013) a hamburger graphic organizer is a great way to structure non-fiction writing. In writing, the more details the better the writing. Further, Morin (2013) states that graphic organizers are a series of visual charts and tools used to represent and organize a student’s knowledge or ideas. Graphic organizers are often used as part of the writing process to help students map out ideas, plots, character details and settings before beginning to write.

The Effectiveness of Graphic Organizers from Related Studies

Studies on hamburger writing has been conducted by several researchers. Five of whom are presented in this section. Lee (2007) investigated Graphic organizers as scaffolding for students’ revision in the pre-writing stage. He used a qualitative design. The result indicates that graphic organizers may be a a good choice in scaffolding revision in addition to text because they enable writers to see better what they are revising. The ability to ‘see’ better may be because organizers, with perceptual operations, differentiate main ideas from sub-ideas clearly and provide an overview of how the ideas in the organisers are related to one another. This facilitates classification and diagnosis of writing problems in the revision process.

Secondly, Wallace, Pearmen, Hail, & Hurst (2007) investigated writing for Comprehension. This aimed at improving students’ reading comprehension through writing at School of Teacher Education Missouri State University. To this end, he used qualitative design that involved describing teaching learning graphic organizer. There was an instrument used in this study which was an observation. The result indicate that the use of writing strategies may facilitate comprehension. These strategies help students strengthen their skills at summarizing, thinking and organizing.

Thirdly, Servati (2012) investigated prewriting strategies and their Effect on Student Writing. The study aimed at to improve the quality of student writing using pre-writing strategies, at two different sources: The first was from teachers at Bayside Academy (a pseudonym). Bayside Academy is a part of a large school district in Western New York that The New York State Report Card for the 2010–2011 school year shows that a total of 665 students were enrolled at Bayside Academy and that the average class size was 22 students. The second source for this study was a tutoring program for struggling readers and writers of all grade levels hosted by Sunnydale University (a pseudonym). Sunnydale is located in Western New York and offers 32 academic majors in humanities, social sciences, sciences, business, and nursing as well as nine pre-professional programs. They also offer ten graduate programs and three doctoral programs. The tutoring program that is housed within the walls of this university consists of 60 students ranging from kindergarten to twelfth grade. Of these 60 students, one third of them attend school in a rural district, one third attends school in a suburban district, and the remaining third attends school in an urban district. To those end, she used an action research design within a tutoring program for struggling writers and a local school.

To those end, she used an action research project design that involved 2 students: a student who from the Sunnydale tutoring program, African American male. , Jamie (a pseudonym) is a seven years old. He attends school in the same district as Bayside Elementary which is a large urban district in Western New York. He is currently in the second grade and his favorite time of the school day is lunch and recess, as well as read aloud. He is a very sociable student who loves listening to and telling stories. Jaime is reading at a level D which is consistent with a beginning first grade reading level. Jaime is receiving low scores in the areas of organization, presentation, conventions and word choice. His lower than grade level ability does not stop Jamie from being motivated to do well and he remains positive about his school and learning experiences. Because of his positive attitude and motivation, he is a student who is easily introduced to new strategies as he is willing to try anything new without hesitation. The second student who participated in this study was Garrison (a pseudonym). Garrison is a seven year old Caucasian male who attends school in a subur-
graphic organizers as teaching technique in writing are effective to improve the students’ attitudes toward writing. These technique can also improve their usage of word choice and organization.

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