IMPROVING THE EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS' DESCRIPTIVE TEXT WRITING ACHIEVEMENT BY USING SINGLE PICTURES AT SMPN 1 SEMPU IN THE 2012/2013 ACADEMIC YEAR

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Abstract : This research was intended to improve the eighth grade students' descriptive text writing achievement at SMPN 1 Sempu by using single pictures. The data that were collected were the students' achievement in writing descripitive text and picture's facilitation in composing descriptive text. The methods used to collect the data were : test and questionnaire. The data about students' achievement was collected through writing test and the data about picture's facilitation was collected through questionnaire. The analysis data in this research was collected from writing test and observation. The result of writing test in the form of the students' scores of writing test was analyzed quantitatively. The research findings of the writing achievement revealed the students who got score ≥ 70 or more increased from 54.8% in the first cycle to 77.4% in the second cycle. The result of questionnaire also increased from 54.8% in the first cycle to 84.3% in the second cycle. In conclusion, the use of single pictures could improve the eighth grade students' descriptive text writing achievement at SMPN 1 Sempu.

Key Words : single pictures, writing achievement, descriptive text

INTRODUCTION

Language is a means of communication. People can communicate with each other by using language. As an international language, English has been used by most people from different nations around the word to express their ideas, thoughts and desire communicate in spoken or in written forms. The importance of English as the key to the international communication and commerce makes it compulsory subject for students from the Junior High School up to the Senior High School. One of the language skills to learn is by writing. Writing is regarded as the most difficult and complicated skills. This is supported by Richards (1990: 100), who says that learning to write well is a difficult and lengthy process, one that induces anxiety and frustration in many learners. Besides, the students should consider some aspects of writing such as grammar, mechanics, content, vocabulary, and organization when they write (Harthfiel, 1985:89). Therefore writing skill is not easy and complicated.

Based on the preliminary study most of the students in grade VIII of SMPN 1 Sempu were passive in joining writing class. In general, their writing achievement was still low which could be seen from the score of their writing test which was only 45% of

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the students in that class who got 70 points or more. Whereas, the minimum requirement standard score of the English at SMPN 1 Sempu is 70 points. The students' experienced difficulties in expressing their ideas into written form. This made their writing often incoherent. In terms of vocabulary, the students sometimes could not place the appropriate word. They sometimes chose inappropriate words which make their sentences meaningless. Dealing with the grammatical problem, the students were often unable to make sentences by using appropriate grammar. They usually still related it with the Indonesian term. This condition made their writing difficult to understand.

In order to overcome such problem in writing skill, the learners should have a way to write well, one of the way is by using medium. The resercher provided an instructional medium that might motivate the students to write the meaningful and grammatical correct sentences. An instructional medium, picture was selected because it has some functions, such as to raise interest and motivation, a sense of context of the language and a specific reference point or stimulus (Wright, 1989: 2). In addition, Rohani (1997:76) states through pictures, the students can pay attention to an object or other matters that they have not seen before; pictures give the students a large experience and understanding. In other words, by looking at the pictures, the students might recognize and remember the objects and understand or interpret them easily. There are three kinds of picture, namely individual picture, composite pictures, and picture in series (Yunus, 1981 : 7-49). In this case individual picture or single picture was used as media to improve the students writing achievement. Using single picture as media would be attractive and interactive ways in teaching writing.

Based on the literature review above, the objective of this research was to know how single pictures can improve the eighth grade students' writing achievement in the teaching and learning process of writing at SMPN 1 Sempu in the 2012/2013 academic year and how single pictures can facilitate the eighth grade students to compose descriptive text writing achievement at SMPN 1 Sempu in the 2012/2013 academic year.

Many researchers had done a classroom action research by using single pictures. Munawaroh (2011:58) found that the use of single pictures could improve the fifth year students' sentence writing achievement at SDN Tawangsari II Tulungagung in the

2010/2011 academic year. Besides, Yulianto (2011) also repeated that teaching writing through single pictures could improve the eighth grade students' achievement in writing descriptive text at SMP Negeri 1 Sukowono in the academic year 2010/2011. The improvement of the students in Yulianto could be seen from the percentage of the students who got score ≥60 or more increased from 66.7% in the first cycle to 78.1% in the second cycle. Then the observation was known that the students' active participation during the teaching learning writing process increased from 54% in the first cycle to 81.1% in the second cycle. Its mean that, the results had achieved the standard score requirement that was targeted.

Single pictures have a function as the teaching media which play a very important role to increase the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. This is because individual pictures can help the students assimilate their ideas in more meaningful and interesting manner. Wright (1989: 17-18) states that pictures can motivate the students and make them want to pay attention and to take a part in the lesson. He adds that pictures contribute to the context in which the language is being used. In addition, Rohani (1997:76) states through pictures, the students can pay attention to an object or other matters that they have not seen before; pictures give the students a large experience and understanding.

In other words, by looking at the pictures, the students might recognize and remember the objects and understand or interpret them easily. Meanwhile, White and Arndt argue that although a single picture may be used as a prompt, each students will bring different perception and interpretation. In teaching learning English, most of the students have difficulties in writing. Hopefully, by using single pictures students was attracted directly to think about the information that is represented on the pictures.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research was intended to improve the eighth grade students' descriptive text writing achievement at SMPN 1 Sempu by using single pictures. Therefore, classroom action research was conducted. According to McMillan (1992: 44) states that classroom action research is a type of applied action research with the purpose of solving a specific classroom problem or making decision at a single local site. In conclusion, the classroom action research was intended to improve the quality of the teaching learning

process. This research was done collaboratively with the English teacher who taught the eighth grade students of SMPN 1 Sempu. The collaboration focused on identifying and defining the research problem, planning the action, carrying out the action of the research, class observation, and doing evaluation and reflection. In order to achieve this purpose, classroom action research was applied. The research model that was applied in this research is the cycle model covering four activities, namely: a) the planning of the action, b) the implementation of the action, c) observation and evaluation, d) reflection of the action (Elliot, 1991:69). If the students' scores in cycle one do not fulfill the standard score requirement, the actions was continued in cycle two. However, if the results of the first cycle achieved the standard score, the second cycle, was needed as reinforcement to know the consistency of the result of the students' writing skill in the first cycle.

The method of determining the research area was purposive method. There were some considerations of choosing SMPN 1 Sempu as the research area. First, as informed by the English teacher in the preliminary study which was conducted on August 11th 2012 the eighth grade students of SMPN 1 Sempu still had difficulties in writing skill. Second, the English teacher in that school did not use single pictures in teaching writing descriptive text in her class. Third, the headmaster and the English teacher of SMPN 1 Sempu gave permission to the researcher to conduct the classroom action research in that school. In addition, the English teacher agreed with the researcher to conduct this research collaboratively. Hence, it was possible to obtain the data of this research.

The method of determining the research subject was purposive method. The subject of this research was the eighth grade students of SMPN 1 Sempu, especially VIII G class. The number of the students in VIII G was 32. The score of the students' writing was only 45% of the students who got score 70. Beside, the students' achievement in writing descriptive text was low because they were not facilitated by any medium like pictures.

In this classroom action research, the data that were collected were students' achievement in writing descripitve text and picture's facilitation in composing descriptive text. The methods used to collect the data were : test and questionnaire. The

data about students' achievement was collected through writing test and the data about picture's facilitation was collected through questionnaire.

Writing test was used to measure the writing achievement of the students through single pictures. According to Hughes (2003:13) achievement test is used to measure how successful individual students, group of students or the course of themselves achieving objective. It meant that test was used to find out the students' ability or competence in a particular skill. In addition, a good test should have validity and reliability (Hughes, 2003:26). A valid test should measure accurately what is supposed to measure. In this research, the content validity is used because the contents of the materials are constructed based on the KTSP 2006 for junior high school.

There are two ways of scoring writing test with less subjective. They are using intra rater and inter rater. Hughes (2003:32) explains that to decrease subjectivity, the writing can be scored by two different scorers (inter rater) or one scorer scoring the same writing test in different occasion (intra rater). In this research, inter rater was applied. The researcher involves two scorers that are the researcher as the scorer 1 and the English teacher as scorer 2. Here, the teacher and the researcher have the same students' answer sheets in the same time. Then, the researcher and the teacher score them in different places. If there is different distance of score between the first and the second scorer, there would be a discussion among the scorers to know why the result was different, and then conclude the real students' score after the discussion. Therefore, the score is believed to be reliable.

Analytic method was used in this research as the scoring method to assess the students' writing test. Hughes (2003:100) states that analytic method is a method of scoring which requires a separate score for each aspect of writing skill. In analytic method there are five aspects that was scored, they are: content, organization, grammar, vocabulary and mechanics.

In this classroom action research questionnaire was conducted in each cycle after the writing test done. This questionnaire was intended to know whether single picture could facilitate students to compose the descriptive text. The indicators that used in questionnaire are whether or not picture helps students find ideas, find the vocabulary, compose sentences, construct the grammar and compose the descriptive text. If the students fulfilled at least three indicators they were categorized that picture

can facilitate the students to compose descriptive text. If 75% of the students could fulfill three indicators, it meant that single picture helps students to compose descriptive text, this research was succesful. After the students finished in composing a descrptive text, the researcher gave the questionnaire and asked them to fill based on their experience in composing text using picture.

The data were collected from writing test and observation. The result of writing test was analyzed quantitatively by considering the percentage of the students who got score 60 or more in the writing test, the total number of the students who got score 60 or more in the riting test and the total number of the students (Ali, 1998: 186).

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this research, the supporting data were collected from the questionnaire. The questionnaire was used to evaluate the students' facilitation in the teaching learning process. The indicators were the pictures can help students find ideas, picture helps students find the vocabulary, picture helps students compose sentences, picture helps students construct the grammar, picture helps students compose the descriptive text. The students were categorized facilitated by using pictures when they fulfilled at least three indicators. There were 32 students in class VIII G who became respondents to fill the questionnaire. In the first cycle the results of questionnaire revealed that only 17 or 54.8% of the students who were facilitated in composing descriptive text by using picture. They were lack of vocabulary and they felt difficult to decide the appropiate word. It happened because the students never seen or touch the picture about animal in their daily life and it made them difficult to decide the appropiate word.

The result of writing test in the first cycle showed that the average of the students' writing achievement test was 54.8%. It meant that the target score of writing achievement in this research had not been met yet. It happened because of the students' behaviour. In the first meeting most of the students felt shy in teaching learning writing proccess, it made the students experienced dificulties in understanding the descriptive text. Besides, most of students still had problems in spelling, writing grammatically correct sentences, lack of vocabularies, and making mistakes in capitalization and punctuation and also lack in organization. There were some factors that influenced the result;

1. The sudents' behaviour in teaching learning proccess.
2. The students still had difficulties to arrange a descriptive text.
3. It was the first time for the students to write descriptive text through single picture.
4. The students had difficulties in writing grammatically correct sentences.
5. The students had problem about punctuation marks and spelling. They did not use capital letter after full stop.
6. The students had problem in using the appropiate word.

The result of the students' writing test did not reach the target score of writing achievement that is 70, so cycle 2 was needed to solve the problems found in cycle 1. The action in cycle 2 was conducted by revising the lesson plan in cycle 1. Furthermore, the researcher expected that the result of cycle 2 better than the result of cycle 1 and met the target score of writing achievement.

Cycle 2 was done after the results of writing test and questionnaire. The results of questionnaire in cycle 2 showed significant improvements both on the students' facilitated in composing descriptive text writing through single pictures and on their achievement in writing. The results of questionnaire and the writing test in the cycle 2, showed that the use of single pictures in teaching writing could improve the students' writing achievement. The students who were facilitated in writing descriptive text through single picture were 84.3%. Furthermore, the percentage students who got score $\geq$70 was 24 students and it could be reached by 77.4% of the students. In other words, the cycle 2 had successfully improved the students' writing achievement and the action cycle was stopped.

In this research, the supporting data were collected from the result of questionnaire. Based on the reflection done in each cycle, it showed that the percentage of students' writing achievement had improved from cycle 1 to cycle 2. In cycle 1, the percentage of the students who got score $\geq$70 was 54.8% or 17 students. It had not met the standard score requirement that was 70% of the students should got score $\geq$70. Therefore, the second cycle was conducted to reach the standard score by adding some vocabularies and mechanics to help the students in composing the descriptive text and explaining about how to write grammatically correct sentences. Further, the results in cycle 2 showed that the percentage of the students who got score $\geq$70 was 77.4% or 24 students. It means that the result of cycle 2 had met the standard score requirement that

was 70% of the students. However the rest of the students (7 of 31 students or 22.5% students) still had difficulties in composing the descriptive text. They often did misspell and did mistakes in writing structure.

From the application of using single pictures in the teaching writing descriptive text, it can be concluded that single pictures could improve and facilitated the students' writing achievement in teaching learning process. It was because the use of single pictures had contributed to improve the students' interest and motivation to pay attention and to take a part in the teaching learning process. This was in line with Wright (1989: 2) who states that pictures contribute to arouse students' interest. Further, by using single pictures, the students were reminded about the situation and the condition they had already experienced. It guided the students to compose their experiences into text. Based on the findings above, it can be concluded that: first, the use of single pictures can improve the eighth grade students' descriptive text writing achievement at SMPN 1 Sempu in the 2012/ 2013. Second, the use of single pictures can facilitate the eighth grade students' writing achievement in composing descriptive text at SMPN 1 Sempu in the 2012/2013 academic year.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGESTIONS

Based on the results of the data analysis and discussion, it can be seen that; first teaching writing through single pictures could improve the eighth grade students' achievement in writing descriptive text at SMP Negeri 1 Sempu in the 2012/2013 academic year. Second, the use of single pictures can facilitate the eighth grade students' writing achievement in composing descriptive text at SMPN 1 Sempu in the 2012/2013 academic year.

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