

# **TEACHER'S STRATEGIES IN TEACHING WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT AT SNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research aimed to describe the teacher's strategies in teaching writing descriptive text and to describe the problems faced by the teacher. It was a descriptive qualitative research design. The subject of this research was one English teacher of SMA Swasta RK Serdang Murni Lubuk Pakam. The data of this research were the teacher's language and the activities in teaching writing descriptive. The results showed that the teacher applied seven strategies they were (1) modify comprehensible input, (2) make lesson visual, (3) link new information, (4) determine key concepts, (5) modify vocabulary instruction, (6) use cooperative learning strategies, and (7) modify testing. And the problems faced by the teacher were the lack of students' vocabularies and the participation in group work.

**Keywords:** *Teaching Writing, Teacher's Strategies, Descriptive Text.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Writing is the process of transferring ideas into a text or written words which can be read and understood. Writing is one of basic language skills which

are very important for students to be mastered. It is because this skill helps students in completing assignments, doing homework, and communicates with people, even expressing their feelings.

There are four language skills which should be mastered by students, those are reading, speaking, listening and writing. Commonly, language can be spoken and written, so it is also necessary for students to learn writing. Besides those four skills, the students also must have knowledge in grammar, spelling, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Those are needed to develop the four language skills. Harmer (2001: 79) states writing skill is as important as the other three skills namely speaking, listening, and reading. In real life, not only speech form of language that is used for communication, but also the written one.

Based on the four language skills, writing is believed most difficult than others language skills. Writing has a difference from other language skills. In listening and reading, the students get and find a message that is formulated by another or the writer. In writing, students communicate with their own ideas and they should be mastered to express and elaborating their ideas without the involvement an interlocutor, but also keep the accuracy of each sentences and the words in the text to make the readers understand of the message in the written text. On the other hand, communication through the written word needs real proficiency from the writer in order to be effective. One of the texts taught for the students at grade tenth of Senior High School is Descriptive text.

Based on the first observation at the tenth grade students of SMA Swasta RK Serdang Murni Lubuk Pakam, there were found that almost 50% students of one class still confusing to write a descriptive text. The observation showed that the students of senior high school could not write in English correctly. It is

supported by the interview results about writing which have done to the tenth students at the school. They said that writing learning is so difficult because they did not understand and know how to change the words from Indonesian into English. They often felt confused how to use the grammar to make the English writing correctly. Westwood (2008:57) states it is because writing is a complex skill involving multiple processes and abilities that problems can arise for some students.

The problems suppose the teacher should be able to find good strategies to make students solve some problems faced in teaching learning process, especially in teaching writing. It is because the teacher's strategy in teaching learning determines the students' success in learning. Strategy is most often conscious and goal-driven, especially in the beginning stages of tackling an unfamiliar language task (Anna, 2005). Strategy generally involves setting goals, determining actions to achieve the goals, and mobilizing resources to execute the actions. According to Hyland (2002:78) writing is learning, rather than taught, and the teacher's best methods are flexibility and support. Brown (2004: 103) states the fundamental of teaching strategies is to make it easier to implement a variety of teaching methods and techniques.

The strategies used by teachers should also be able to support the implementation of the 2013 curriculum as set by the government. 2013 curriculum (K-13) is a curriculum of values that occupied by character building (Djuwairiah, 2014). The 2013 Curriculum is applied by the scientific approach. This approach emphasizes more on student activated learning. In the implementation of this approach emphasizes five important aspects: observing, questioning, experimenting, associating, and communicating. These aspects are the main

activities which should be done by students as long as the teaching learning process. The teacher served as a facilitator and controller. Therefore teachers should be able to find teaching strategies that can create these five aspects in teaching learning process. Some teaching strategies which can be used to achieve the aspects are presented by Haynes and Zacarian on their book such as: provide comprehensible input, make lessons visual, link new information, determine key concepts, modify vocabulary instruction, use cooperative learning strategies, and modify testing. It is relevant with a previous study by Raharjanto with title “Teacher’s Strategies in Teaching Writing Descriptive Text at Mts N Sukoharjo in 2015/2016 Academic Year”.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **1. Writing in Language Learning**

The objective of the teaching of English in Indonesia is that the students will be able to use English for communication. Communication involve the use of four language skill such us listening, speaking, reading, and writing, but the writing skill requires more capabilities than others language skills and it needs good preparation. Writing is an activity in arranging words,

phrases, and sentences that is grammatically correct and appropriate with its purpose. According to Kern (2000:172) writing is a process to develop ability to think explicitly about how to organize and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas in way compatible with wished readers' expectations. While Harmer (2004:4) said that to deliver from that explain of course we used to practice of express what idea in our mind in the form of list, letter, essay, reports, or novels.

## 2. Descriptive Text

The focus of this research is Descriptive text.

Its purpose is to describe and reveal a particular person, place, or thing. The tense that used in descriptive text is simple present tense. As Pardiyo (2007:34) states description is a type of written text which has specific function to give description about an object (human or non-human). Descriptive is kind of genre which has been taught in senior high school.

## 3. Teacher Strategies in Teaching Writing

According to Cashwel & Mahler (2000:3), teaching writing provides opportunities for students to develop clear thinking skill. Teaching writing is a process to make the students have ability to write an English sentence, paragraph, and text correctly. It is also as a process of making the students have critical thinking in writing. So to be a teacher we have a strategy to make students have critical thinking in writing. In teaching writing, the purpose of the strategies are to help teacher presents lesson and give understanding about writing to the students, and help students to understand the way to write and can write a text well. From the all strategies, teacher should know what strategies which are fit to her students in learning writing and also can support the 2013 curriculum implementation

which uses the scientific approach. This research represents seven strategies which are listed by Haynes and Zacarian (2010) that can be used by teacher in teaching writing.

**a. Provide Comprehensible Input**

The learner must understand the message that is conveyed. He purports that students acquire language by hearing and understanding messages that are slightly above their current English language level. Teachers need to speak more slowly, use gestures and body language to get across the meaning to students.

**b. Make Lessons Visual**

The visual learning style is a way of learning in which information is associated with images or graphics. Haynes and Zacarian (2010) states that teachers also need to think about the visual aids that will best aid comprehension, how to simplify the language of instruction, and how to deliver instruction that is targeted to both the English proficiency levels of students and their grade-level content.

**c. Link New Information**

Teachers need to consider what schema students brings to the classroom and to link instruction to the students' personal, cultural, and world experiences. Teachers also need to know what their students do not know. They must understand how culture impacts learning in their classroom.

**d. Determine Key Concepts**

It is for the unit and defines language and content objects for each lesson. Teachers write the key concept for a unit of study in student-friendly language

and post it in the room. At the end of the lesson, students should be asked if the objective was met.

**e. Modify Vocabulary Instruction**

Teachers should also provide practice in pronouncing new words. Students need much more exposure to new terms, words, idioms, and phrases than do English fluent peers. Teachers need to tie new vocabulary to prior learning and use visual to reinforce meaning.

**f. Use Cooperative Learning Strategies**

Cooperative strategy is a systematic pedagogical strategy that encourages small groups of students to work together for the achievement of a common goal. Working in small groups is beneficial to students who have an authentic reason to use academic vocabulary and real reasons to discuss key concepts.

**g. Modify Testing**

Content area testing and assessments needs to be differentiated for students. Teacher test the students' ability about the lesson in the classroom. Remember that the students may not be able to take a note.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research was conducted based on the qualitative research. Qualitative research is a research, which has a natural setting. (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992). The data of this research were the teacher's language and the activities while teaching writing descriptive text at the tenth grade students in SMA Swasta RK Serdang Murni Lubuk Pakam. There were two techniques to collect the data, they were video recording and interviewing.

Moreover, the data obtained were analyzed used the analysis procedure by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014). The data obtained were analyzed as follows:

1. Identifying the data by matching the theory of teacher strategies with the transcript of the teaching writing descriptive text process.
2. Classifying the identified data in accordance with the problems of study and the basic theory.
3. Describing the teacher's strategies in teaching writing descriptive text and draw conclusion based on data findings.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### *Research findings*

#### **1. The Strategies of Teaching Writing Descriptive Text**

In teaching writing descriptive text, the teacher needs to apply some strategies to solve some students' problems. Haynes and Zacarian (2010) presented seven strategies that should be mastered by teacher. After analyzing the data, the research questions mentioned in the previous chapter were elaborated and answered as the following findings.

The curriculum that implemented in teaching learning at the school is 2013 Curriculum. The teacher's strategies in teaching writing descriptive text are integrated with the scientific approach of the 2013 Curriculum. There are seven strategies that were applied by the teacher in teaching writing descriptive text, they were (1) modify comprehensible input, (2) make lesson visual, (3) link new information, (4) determine key concepts, (5) modify vocabulary instruction, (6) use cooperative learning strategies, and (7) modify testing.



### 1. Table 4.1 Teacher's Strategies in Teaching Writing Descriptive Text

No	Scientific Approach	Teacher's Strategy							Media
		PCI	MLV	LNI	DKC	MVI	UCLS	MT	
1.	Observing		√		√				LCD, Laptop.
2.	Questioning			√					
3.	Associating	√							
4.	Experimenting					√	√		
5.	Communicating							√	

### 2. The Problems Faced by The Teacher in Teaching Writing Descriptive Text

The teacher faced two problems in the process of teaching writing descriptive text. The first was about the lack of students' vocabularies. Students did not have enough vocabularies to write, they still asked what vocabularies that should be used by them when they were writing. The second is about the students' participations when work in group. There were almost a half number of students who did not participate to solve the problem that given by teacher to each group. Some of them even chatting each other.

### *Discussions*

The teaching learning process showed that the teacher taught her students actively and guided students in all students' activities. It also showed that more than a half number of students followed the teaching learning process actively and enjoyed the situation of teaching learning process. The teacher's strategies helped students to understand about the explanation of descriptive text, but they should practice more to write a descriptive text because the time of that activity was so

limit, and the student who communicated it only two students chosen by the teacher. The teacher spent too many times in guiding students to observe and giving explanation to associate students of descriptive text itself.

The condition that happened in this study was almost similarly occurs in some previous study. Fadholi (2016), Pahlevi (2014) and Harianja (2016) found that strategies were applied by the teacher in teaching writing were make lesson visual and cooperative learning strategy and modify testing. However, the strategies were mentioned with different strategies' names. Fadholi (2016) found that the strategies were applied by the teacher in teaching writing descriptive text were make lesson visual and cooperative learning. The strategies applied by making a group and analyzing the picture. The problems faced by the teacher were about the students' vocabulary problem, structure problem and generic structure problem.

Pahlevi (2014) in his study found that to apply five learning phase of scientific approach the teacher used kinds of strategy such as the using of picture, working in group, and testing students in individual and group. The implementation of the strategies gained informative responses from the students. While Harianja (2016) concluded that cooperative strategy was the only one indicator of success of three English teachers when teaching writing narrative in her research.

## **Conclusions and Suggestions**

### *Conclusions*

1. The teacher applied the seven strategies by Haynes and Zacarian (2010) in teaching writing descriptive text, they were (1) modify comprehensible input, (2) make lesson visual, (3) link new information, (4) determine key concepts, (5)

modify vocabulary instruction, (6) use cooperative learning strategies, and (7) modify testing. The strategies applied by the teacher affected the teaching writing process looked interesting and made students active in classroom. Students could understand the explanation of descriptive text well.

2. There were two problems that faced by the teacher in teaching writing descriptive text. The problems appeared from the students' self. The first is about the lack of students' vocabularies. The second is about the students' participations when work in group. Only several students who worked actively with their group, almost a half number of students did not participate to solve problem.

### *Suggestions*

In relation to the conclusions, some suggestions related to this study were presented as follows:

1. Theoretically, the findings of this research can later add some new theories and information in teaching writing descriptive text.
2. Practically,
  - a. For teacher, the English teacher should improve their ability more on mixed those all strategy to achieve the scientific approach activities

maximally especially in cooperative learning strategy and increase students' writing skill especially in writing descriptive text.

- b. For students, the students should cooperate more active to solve problem that given by teacher in group discussion.
- c. For next researchers, the next researcher is finally suggested to conduct varied research concerning to the teaching-learning process in classroom without having to tell the purpose of the study to the subject firstly before the study is completed, in order to get the result of the study more naturally.

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