

## Enhancing Students' Ability in Writing Descriptive Text through Graphic Organizers

Maslichah<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>UIN Walisongo Semarang

<sup>1</sup>maslichah17@gmail.com

Siti Tarwiyah<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>UIN Walisongo Semarang

<sup>2</sup>sititarwiyah98@gmail.com

### ABSTRACT

Graphic organizers are visual displays of crucial content information designed to benefit learners who have difficulty organizing information and it could help the students to build and generate ideas. The study was aimed at finding the answers to the following research questions: (1) How is the implementation of graphic organizers to enhance students' ability in writing the descriptive text? (2) How is the enhancement of students' ability in writing descriptive text through graphic organizers? This study was a classroom action research. The data were obtained through documentation, observation, and test. It was conducted in three cycles with the 24 eighth grade students of MTs Nurul Islam Juwangi in the academic year of 2016/2017. The result of this research showed that students' ability was improved in each cycle after they were taught using graphic organizers. They were better in their descriptive text writing concerning content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanic.

### ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 17 April 2017

Accepted 9 September 2017

### KEYWORDS

writing ability; descriptive text; graphic organizers

### Introduction

Writing is one of four skills in English. Writing is skill that expresses feeling using writing. Writing is included in productive skill. Productive skill is developing ideas through knowledge and vocabulary that had by the writer. In this skill, Students actually can produce language themselves based on their ideas through their knowledge and vocabulary. When students write a text, they can write based on their knowledge, idea or what is in their mind. The other skill in productive skill is speaking. Speaking is the way to express feeling using orally. Students can develop their ideas in oral.<sup>1</sup>

Learning to write is not only writing the thing down. Writing takes more than 45 minutes to compose a paragraph because writing considers the process of writing and the cohesion every sentence. The researcher observed the teaching-learning

---

<sup>1</sup> Jeremy Harmer, *The Practice of English Language Teaching fourth Edition*, (England: Pearson Longman), page 265

process in eighth grade at MTs Nurul Islam Juwangi. The English language teacher only explained and wrote the material on the blackboard. It made students feel challenging to write because there were some problems when they would write. They feel challenging to express ideas, develop the idea related to the topic, they also get the problem in using the adjective, and present tense. They do not arrange the words in a proper sentence. So, the result of writing text is not optimal.

In the teaching process, teachers play vital role to facilitate students' learning through appropriate choice of media and methods, besides the mastery of teaching materials. They should be creative to draw student's interest and motivation in learning. There are some media usually used in the teaching-learning process. They consist of visual media, audio media, and audio-visual media. Visual media can be seen and have the function to distribute the message from the sources to the receiver. Audio media are connected with one of the five senses, that is ears that can hear something produced by sound. Audio-visual is media that combine both sound and pictures.<sup>2</sup> The teachers are demanded to choose the appropriate ones to make the class fresh and interesting. Hopefully, the students will be happy and will not be bored learning English.

Graphic organizers are visual displays of crucial content information designed to benefit learners who have difficulty organizing information. They may be implemented in various kinds of activities and forms, i.e., story map, fishbone Ishikawa diagram, Venn diagram, cause and effect web, KWL table, concept map, mind map, etc.<sup>3</sup> Graphic organizers are meant to help students visualize how ideas are organized within a text or surrounding a concept. Graphic organizers provide students with a structure for abstract ideas. Graphic organizers present material through the visual and spatial modalities (and reinforce what is taught in the classroom), the use of graphic organizers helps students internalize what they are learning.

A graphic organizer is one of the visual media because it can be seen and performs a meaningful description. It makes students more interested in writing descriptive text. They will make the text more easily because they can develop ideas on the graphic which they create. It will help them in creating a good descriptive text.

## Methods

This work is a classroom action research. According to Suharsimi Arikunto and Suyadi, there are four steps in conducting the research. They are planning, acting, observing and reflecting. This action research was carried out at the eighth grade of

---

<sup>2</sup> Prof. Dr. Azhar Arsyad, *Media Pembelajaran*, (Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada, 2003), p.30

<sup>3</sup> Tarwiyah, *Vision: Journal for Language and Foreign Language Learning*, (<http://journal.walisongo.ac.id/index.php/vision/article/view/1635/1202>)

MTs Nurul Islam Juwangi Boyolali-Indonesia. The data were taken through documentation, observation, and test.

Documentation was aimed at getting information about students' name and teacher's schedule. This study used observation and test to get its primary data. According to Mustafa, primary data are data which are collected directly by the researcher from the subject of the research. Whereas secondary data are collected and documented so that the researcher copied the data for the research necessary.<sup>4</sup>The observation was conducted to know the students' activities during the teaching-learning process and to identify problems of learning in order to look for the appropriate solution to solve the problem gathered by the collaborator. The test was used to measure the students' ability in writing descriptive text that had been taught in the teaching-learning process through graphic organizers.

William uses the test term as a measurement. It is a process of assigning numerals according to the rules. The numerals are assigned to events or objects, such as responses to items or certain observed behaviors.<sup>5</sup> In this research, the researcher examined the students' writing ability of descriptive text by giving an essay test. It means that students have to write a descriptive text based on the graphic organizers.

The data were analyzed through this formula

$$Score = \frac{\sum x}{S \max} \times 100\%$$

$\sum x$ : Score got

S max: Score maximum

## Result and Discussion

### *Description of The Implementation of Graphic Organizers*

According to Katherine, Graphic organizers are teaching and learning tools that students better be able to understand new material. Creating a strong visual picture, graphic organizer support students by enabling them to see connections and relationships between facts, information, and term.

A graphic organizer is a visual display that demonstrates relationships between facts, concepts or ideas. A graphic organizer guides the learner's thinking as they fill in and build upon a visual map or diagram. They are also informally used as a term to describe all visual learning strategies such as concept mapping, webbing, mind mapping, and more.

Graphic organizers guide learners' thinking as they fill in and build upon a visual map or diagram. Graphic organizers are some of the most effective visual

---

<sup>4</sup>Mustafa EQ, Zainal. *Mengurai Variable Hingga Instrument*. (Yogyakarta: Graha Ilmu, 2013). Ed.1. p.92

<sup>5</sup> Wiersma, William. *Research Methods in Education*. (Massachusetts: Simon and Schuster, 1995), p.308

learning strategies for students and are applied across the curriculum to enhance learning and understanding of subject matter content.

This study was called classroom action research. The activities could be seen as the following.

a. Planning

The researcher designed a lesson plan as a guide in teaching-learning of descriptive text, arranged observation checklist to observe the students' activities during teaching and learning process, prepared graphic organizer sheets as media of learning, prepared test instruments covering test paper and score table.

b. Acting

In this stage, the researcher started to take a role as a teacher by employing graphic organizers as media in the teaching-learning process. The teacher started the class by greeting the students, asking them to recite *basmalah* and checking their attendance. Before explaining the material of descriptive text, the teacher stimulated them by giving questions what did they know about the descriptive text. However, most of them shake their head and just kept silent. After that, the teacher gave more information about descriptive text in front of the class. For giving more comprehension about the material, the students were given graphic organizers as a medium to explore their ideas in writing text. Before starting to write their idea, teacher gave more explanation about graphic organizers and example on how to use it in writing activities.

After getting clear on how to use graphic organizers in writing activities, the students, then, filled story map with keywords representing their idea. Some students answered directly because they knew the vocabulary. Some other students looked for the vocabulary in their book or dictionary. Based on the keywords, the students, then, wrote a descriptive text related to the topic. Few students made it correctly. Others wrote it correctly after the teacher gave correction.

The next step was the teacher divided them into six groups. They were twenty-four so that one of the groups consisted of four members. Each group was distributed a graphic organizer. The teacher gave instructions on how to use and what they had to do. Each group discussed vocabulary needed to be written in the graphic. After they found the suitable words, they wrote the description using the words. Teacher monitored and checked the group work. After they had finished, the representative of each group shared their work in front of the class. Teacher and students gave a correction to work together before giving a test, teacher-reviewed and concluded the material. To know their comprehension of the materials, teacher gave test to get the students' achievement. The collaborator who

helped the teacher gave worksheet of the test. Finally, teacher and students end the lesson by reciting *hamdalah*.

The information of the students' writing ability of descriptive text was gotten through the test. The students' average score was 68,13. It is known that half students got the problem in writing. Students felt challenging to develop their idea regarding the given topic because their vocabulary was limited. It made the content of their writing insufficient. Almost all of the students understood the sentences pattern and grammar, but they still need to enhance their vocabulary. All of the students knew the punctuation, but their mistake was they did not write the capital letter at the beginning of sentences. Some of them did not use point in the last sentence, but they used a coma. Because of those problems, the student's score was still low, and some of them did not reach the standard of minimum score.

c. Observing

While the teaching-learning process was running, the researcher observed the students' activities, and the collaborator observed the teachers' activities based on the observation checklist.

d. Reflecting

The researcher and the collaborator analyzed the result of test and observation, concluded the students' writing ability, and planning an intervention for the next cycle. Students who had a low score were ascertained to need the opportunity to improve their writing ability.

The topic of each cycle is provided in table 3.1.

Cycle	The topic of Descriptive Text	Reflection
Pre	Classroom	The teacher did not give more explanation on how to write a good text Some of the students did not pay attention
1	Friendship	The teacher used GO and gave more explanation on how to write a good text Teacher could not manage the time well Students confused to explore their idea through GO without a picture
2	Actor	Teachers' performance was good enough Teachers completed GO with picture The teacher could manage the class well Students could deliver their idea through GO in a

		written text Students had a mistake in grammar (presents tense) and mechanics (punctuation and capitalization)
3	Family	The teacher gave an explanation more about grammar and mechanics Students reached the standard of minimum score.

**Table 3.1** Topic and Result of Test of each Cycle

***The Enhancement of Students' Participation and Ability in Writing Descriptive Text***

This classroom action research was conducted in three cycles since through the cycles sufficient improvement had been made. The improvement of students' participation in the teaching-learning process and their writing ability is listed in table 3.2.

Cycle	Students' Participation	Students Average Score
Pre	56.67	62.08
1	60	68.13
2	70	72.50
3	80	75.29

**Table 3.2** Students' Participation and Writing Ability

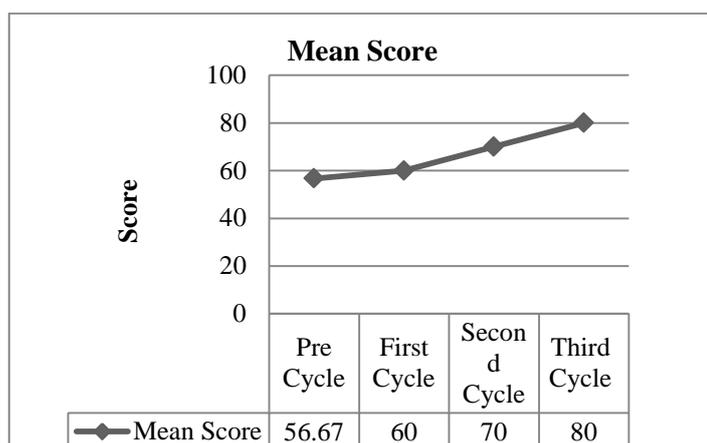
Based on students' participation and students' score in every cycle Graphic Organizers could enhance the students' ability in writing descriptive text. It could be seen that the implementation of graphic organizers in the teaching writing of descriptive text helped the students develop their idea. They also paid more attention and were more enthusiastic in the learning process. They could answer the teachers' question confidently because they knew the answer after seeing the picture in the graphic organizers. Before they had taught using graphic organizers they were not confident.

Using graphic organizers in the teaching of writing descriptive text helped students expressed their ideas and opinion. Graphic organizers gave a contribution to students to generate ideas through clear visualization. They had made them enjoy their activity to convey their idea more. It could make passive students active. They asked the question, shared their idea, gave correction to their friend in the group and presented their work confidently.

It showed that after being taught using graphic organizers, students ability in writing descriptive text regarding content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and

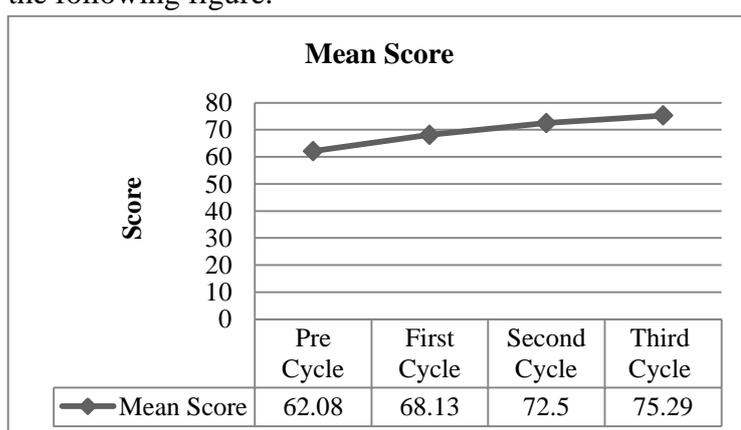
mechanic were improved in every cycle. Finally, they reached the standard of minimum score.

The significant enhancement of students' participation and ability in writing descriptive text after being taught using Graphic organizers as the media may also be put in the following figure.



**Figure 3.1** Increasing Students' Participation

According to the data above, the students' participation whole teaching-learning process get improvement in every cycle. The lowest score of students participation is 56.67%. It is the pre-cycle score. The highest score of students participation is 80.00%, which is the third cycle score. The students' participation in teaching learning process get improvement, and it is followed by improving the students' score in writing Descriptive text from cycle one to cycle two and three. The recapitulation of students' score from pre-cycle until the third cycle can be drawn in the following figure.



**Figure 3.2** Students' Improvement Based on the Mean Score

The success of enhancing students' ability in writing descriptive text through graphic organizers can be seen from the chart above. The conventional way that was

used in the precycle shows the mean of pre-cycle was 62.08. It means the score is lower than 70, as the minimum criterion of passing score. In the first cycle, the mean of the students' score is 68.13. Then in the second cycle, the mean of the students' score is 72.50. Meanwhile, the result of the third cycle shows the better improvement that reaches 75.29 as the mean. Students can reach the minimum criterion of passing score 70.

From the explanations above, it could be concluded that the implementation of graphic organizers to teach writing should enhance students' ability in writing descriptive text. For that reason, the researcher stopped the research, because the students' score had reached the standard of minimum score and students' ability in writing descriptive text could be enhanced through graphic organizers.

## **Conclusion**

The research conclusion is drawn according to with the data which had been analyzed. From all the data analysis about enhancing students' ability through graphic organizers in writing descriptive text, it can be concluded that:

1. Graphic organizers were variedly implemented to teach the writing of the descriptive text. Firstly, students collected the words and answered some questions about the graphic. Their answers were arranged in sentences by using words that they had collected. After that, students wrote descriptive text in paragraph through the answers. Secondly, students wrote their ideas on the graphic then organize them into a paragraph. Thirdly, graphics supported by picture and vocabulary were organized into a paragraph.
2. The improvement of students' ability in writing descriptive text through graphic organizers was proven by the improvement of students' score in each cycle. Through graphic organizers, they could express about what they felt and what's in their mind in the form of written text. In the first cycle, the mean of the students' score was 68.08. Then the result of the second cycle showed that the mean of students' score was 72.50. Then in the third cycle, the mean of the students' score was 75.29. Using graphic organizers in teaching of writing descriptive text helped students express their ideas and opinion. Graphic organizers could make passive students active.

## References

- Arikunto, Suharsimi. *Dasar-Dasar Evaluasi Pendidikan*. Yogyakarta: Bina Aksara. (1986).
- \_\_\_\_\_, Suhardjo and Supardi. *Penelitian Tindakan Kelas*. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara. (2008).
- Arsyad, Azhar. *Media Pembelajaran*. Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada. (2003).
- Harmer, Jeremy. *The Practice of English Language Teaching fourth Edition*. Pearson Longman: England.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *How to Teach Writing*. England: Pearson. (2007).
- Karen Blanchard and Christina Root, *Ready to Write: A First Composition Text "Third Edition."* United State of America: Longman. (1951).
- Katherine S. McKnight, Ph.D. *The Teacher's Big Book of Graphic Organizers*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. (2010).
- Mustafa EQ, Zainal. *Mengurai Variabel Hingga Instrumen*. Yogyakarta: Graha Ilmu, (2013).
- Meyers, *Gateways to Academic Writing*, New York: Pearson, (2005).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Research Methodology in Language Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (2006).
- Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan: Pendekatan Kuantitatif, kualitatif, dan R & D*, Bandung: Alfabeta, (2010).
- Suyadi, *Panduan Penelitian Tindakan Kelas*, Jogjakarta: Diva Press, (2012).
- Tarwiyah, Siti. (2015). "Functioning Graphic Organizer as One of Literacy Media" in *Vision: Journal for Language and Foreign Language Learning* Vol. 4 No. 1 (2015). Retrieved on August 10, 2017, from <http://journal.walisongo.ac.id/index.php/vision/article/view/1635/1202>
- Wiersma, William. *Research Methods in Education*. Massachusetts: Simon and Schuster. (1995).