

ENGAGING STUDENTS ON DESCRIPTIVE WRITING THROUGH SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION PRE-SERVICE TEACHER'S TEACHING EXPERIENCES

Linda Sari

Lindasari04898@gmail.com

Department of English Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education,
University of Singaperbangsa Karawang

doi: _____

Abstract

This present study is aimed to know pre-service teacher teaching experience students writing descriptive text. Therefore, this study investigates the process of the teaching and learning descriptive text through small group discussion. This study uses Qualitative approach and uses Narrative Inquiry as the method in gaining the data. The participants of this research are pre-service teacher's students studying of University Singaperbangsa Karawang and teacher of Senior High School Karawang. Observation, interview, reflective journal and documentation are used to collect the data to get the information or answer related to the research question. The result found out that there are four ways pre-service teacher teaches writing Descriptive Text, those are building knowledge of the field (BKOF), modeling, step joint construction of text and independent construction of text. Moreover, there are also obstacle factors when pre-service teacher teaches descriptive text. The researcher found that all of participant had no obstacle factor in teaching, all participant seem students who had obstacle in teaching descriptive text, it would describe with divided the three categories such as in Psychological Problem, in Linguistics Problem, and Cognitive Problems or means factor because of the lack knowledge of the target language, lack of practice and lack of vocabulary.

Keywords: *Ways pre-service teacher, Obstacle factors, Descriptive text, Small group discussion.*

INTRODUCTION

It would be different for pre-service teachers to learn skills of lesson planning and classroom management without practising. Teaching practice program which is known as PPL (Program Pengalaman Lapangan) is a program pre-service teacher for teaching students under the supervisor of school teachers to get the skill in teaching. Pre-service teachers also teaching students about lesson are in school. One is learning writing an important role for students who are in the process of learning a language.

In Indonesian school, students are required to learn to write different text types. They are Recount, Narrative, Procedural, News Item and Descriptive. One of them is the teaching

method used by pre-service teachers in teaching descriptive text.

In Indonesia, descriptive writing is one of the types of writing that should be taught and mastered not only by the English teachers, but also by the senior high school students particularly those in Grades Tenth. Many students have problems with their writing skills. The students feel understanding the meaning of the text is not easy, students' lack of vocabulary, and also grammar. Therefore, pre-service teacher should have a lot of creativity to make the class situation more comfortable in learning. To solve that problem and to get effective teaching in a learning process, pre-service teacher is recommended to make good preparations and teacher need fun learning activities to fade students'

boredom in the classroom the researcher overcomes the problems of writing descriptive text by using a fun method because the researcher needs an interesting method for students. Having an interesting method can be a way to get the students active in the classroom and engage during learning. There are many techniques, approaches and methods that can be applied, but this research focuses on small group discussion. Small Group Discussion is a technique that can make it simple to do lessons and make it easier to solve some ideas into writing or speaking. Therefore, in order to help students, the researcher applied Small Group Discussion to teaching descriptive text in writing. A literature circle as a reading method and also provides a social space for students to engage in an active learning reading by talking about the text being read, sharing the ideas, sharing what they have understood or learned about the text, responding to it, and discussing their interpretations. This research intended to find out teaching experience in writing descriptive text through pre-service teachers' students. The main research objective for this study was to gain insights into the ways pre-service teachers and their obstacle experiences in teaching writing descriptive text. The results of the study are expected to provide help to enhance current teaching experiences and accordingly improve the teacher education programme.

1. Pre-service teachers.

Pre-service teachers are someone who learn to be a professional teacher. A professional teacher is someone who can give the reflection about their experience and can mentor another person. Becoming a professional teacher takes a lot of time and many experiences (Lamon & Aldrich, 2003). Pre-service teachers can learn to be professional teachers through enrolling in Educational Department in a University. Then afterwards, they can get a bachelor's degree. Pre-service teacher program is aimed to set up graduates to have quality as a teacher (Bransford, Darling, Hammond, & LePage, 2005). Quality as a teacher means a good pedagogical competence in which pre-service teachers can connect the pedagogical theory. In

addition, pre-service teachers also can apply in their teaching experiences.

A study by Wilson, Floden, and Mundy (2001) found that new and experienced teachers perceived field experience to be the most important component of pre-service training programmes. Emphasising the importance of collaboration between schools and universities, Dawson and Norris (2000) suggested that these collaborations can bridge the gap between theories and the applications necessary for planning successful teaching experiences. In creating an elementary field-based course, Jacobsen (1999) found that field experience exposed students to situations in which content and pedagogy were connected in a meaningful way.

Pre-service teachers need time to practice their knowledge in the real school setting. According to Luebbbers (2010), the teaching practice program is believed to provide pre-service teachers with new and different ways of teaching a foreign language. Moreover, this program also makes them as prospective foreign language teachers. Besides, pre-service teachers view themselves as professionals determine how they feel about themselves as teachers in the classroom (Hong, 2010; Mahan, 2010). From this perspective, it is clear that teaching practice program plays an important role in constructing pre-service teachers.

2. Descriptive writing text.

According to Brown (2001: 336), writing is a thinking process. Furthermore, he states that writing can be planned and given with an unlimited number of revisions before its release. Linse (2006:98) also stated that writing is a combination of process and product of discovering ideas, putting them on paper and working with them until they are presented in a manner that is polished and comprehensible to readers. Thus, it can be stated that writing is a thinking process of discovering ideas then written on the paper. Kane (2005:352) states "description is about sensory experience how something looks, sounds, tastes. Mostly is about visual experience, but description also deals

with other kinds of perception.” Based on Curriculum 2013 which is the current educational Curriculum in Indonesia, descriptive text is one of the genre of text that have to be taught in teaching writing for Junior High School students (Depdiknas, Indonesian Educational Department, 2013:70). In this study, the researcher will be focused on descriptive text for the tenth grade students of Senior High School.

Gerot and Wignell (1995:208) state that the Generic structure of descriptive writing are:

- a) Identification which identifies phenomenon that will be describe
- b) Description which describe parts, qualities, or characteristics of something or someone in detail.

3. Small group discussion.

According George Brown, Madeleine Atkins, a effective and simple method for involving students is known a small group discussion. Discussion method is a learning method that exposes students to a problem. Small group discussion is process exchange ideas with another people such as experience, solve the problem and information.

According to Ernest (1997), small group discussion allows presenters to announce a topic or idea for group discussion among participants. Its mean that small group discussion is group who have leader to discuss or solve problem. The purpose pf the small group discussion is to contribute and circulate information on a particular topic, analyzed and evaluate the information for support evidence in order to reach an agreement on general conclusions.

According to Harmer (2001:117-118) the advantages of small group discussion are :

1. It dramatically increases the amount of talking for individual students.
2. Because there more than two people in the group, personal relationship are usually less problematic; there is also a greater chance of different opinions and varied contribution.
3. It encourages broader skills of cooperation and negotiation.
4. It promotes students autonomy by allowing students to make their own decision in in the group without being told what to do by the teacher.

METHOD

This study aims to describe pre-service teachers teaching experience engaging students writing on descriptive text through small group discussion. The participation form is cognitive, and emotional. This research uses qualitative approach with the design narrative inquiry is applied to conduct this study due to the result of this study description of the overall analysis. According to Creswell (2012), Narrative study is used to know an individual or more stories of their life or its experience about something that has a crucial part in life that conduct in a chronological compilation related to the past, present, and future.

Three pre- service teachers aand one teacher in SMK Pratama Mulya Karawang took as the participants of this research. The researcher chooses that school because it has access to the teacher and knows the students' characteristics in teaching training. These pre-service teachers will be given a question or interview about teaching experience on student's writing descriptive text.

The research focuses teaching on student's writing descriptive text. The technique of collecting data was an observation, interview, reflective journal and documentation. The observation technique is done through field notes. In these field notes and an unstructured or semi-structured (using some prior questions that the inquirer wants to know) activities at the research site. To collect the data the researcher uses several instruments: field notes, reflective journal and interview guidelines. The collecting data will use thematic analysis that has been obtained from observation, interview, and documentation because thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and report patterns (theme). according to Brown and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis describe an interactive process as to how to fix messy data to a map of the most important themes of the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

These descriptions are related to the implementation of teacher's teaching experience engaging students on descriptive writing at SMK in Karawang. The data were obtained from interview with an English

teacher, pre-service teachers and documentation. Researcher had interview with an English teacher and three pre-service teachers. Researcher conducted interview to find out what ways pre-service teachers taught descriptive writing through small group discussion. In addition, the researcher also had reflective journal to clarify teaching experience pre-service teachers. The researcher used three meeting reflective journal for accurate data.

Since to be pre-service teacher might be faced several problems. Analyzed problems could be an appropriate way to indicate where the problems that should be fixed the most is. After knowing problems that encounter by pre-service teacher in teaching descriptive text, the researcher tried to find out the factors that causes the problem.

1. In what ways pre-service teacher teaches descriptive writing through small group discussion.

In implementing the ways of teaching writing on descriptive text, there were some of fundamental roles of teacher and students. Based on research finding, pre-service teacher role in ways of teaching writing on descriptive text was as facilitator. She also had a role in managing and giving evaluations in teaching writing on descriptive text. As facilitator, pre-service teachers provided the students need in learning.

Based on the research finding, the observation and analysis the procedure the ways of teaching writing on descriptive text. According Scrivener, that prepare thoroughly. But, in class, teach the learners, not the plan.

In knowing problems by each participants, the researcher interviewed about pre-service teacher experience during teaching and learning process of material about Descriptive Text in Tenth Grade at SMK Pratama Mulya Karawang. After that, researcher conducted the interview which involved 4 respondents by giving eight questions. In answering the first research question, it would describe into four step: building knowledge of the field (BKOF). There were the activities of greeting, reviewing last

material and introducing new material such as R1, R2, R3 and R4 who stated that ways for teaching descriptive text everything was almost the same ways. That was in line with teacher role in classroom observation that giving questions in the warning up session before the materials discussed in details in the main activity. Sometimes there were still miscommunications between the teacher and students. The second step in teaching writing on descriptive text was modeling. The teacher introduced an example of descriptive text with modeling. The teacher also explained a little bit information about the function of descriptive text and using of have/has on the text.

The teacher in teaching writing on descriptive text also used step joint construction of text was an activity involving all the students in doing exercise or reconstruction the text. It could be divided in groups, consisting of several students or in pairs. In the last step the independent construction of text, the teacher provided the topic and a piece of paper to write the text. The student were free to make a descriptive text with their own words, but they had to concern the arrangement to make a good paragraph.

2. What are obstacle factors when pre-service teacher teaches descriptive writing through small group discussion?

In analyzing problems faced by pre-service teacher in teaching descriptive text, the researcher also wanted to know obstacle factors of pre-service teacher. In gaining data, the researcher conducted an interview and asked two questions. This would also answer the second research question presented in this research. Last, in getting the result of obstacle factors, the researcher analyzed students' worksheet about descriptive text.

As mentioned by Byrne (1995) that there are three problems that can rise while writing, those are: psychological problems, linguistic problems, and cognitive problems. In psychological problems, students seemed enthusiast in learning about Descriptive Text by showing their interest in teaching learning process. Lot of students feel confuse when they write

Descriptive Text as stated by R3, and R4 in the interview. The confusion they got was from linguistic features of the text. Therefore, psychological aspect that could be problem was laziness. Almost all students showed and agreed when the teacher and researcher asked about being lazy in writing Descriptive Text. The reason was that they did not get the material clear so they felt they were lazy to continue learning about Descriptive Text. Psychological problems was major problems faced by students because they think it's minor problem because they can overcome or solve the problem easily by themselves. In linguistics problems, several point mentioned by the participants. First problem was vocabulay, some students felt hard to use the vocabulary because their vocabulary was limited as mentioned by R1,R2,R3 and R4. Another problem is in the grammar or verb. Another linguistic problems faced by students were translating from Bahasa Indonesia to English. In cognitive problems, most of students stated that organizing ideas was hardest part. As said by R2 and R4 they believed that choosing and developing the topic were difficult. Generating ideas of the topic hard for the students that also they had to write the text in English. They often faced the "stuck" moment when they couldn't think about things that they should write in their Descriptive Text. Organizing ideas is like the foundation when someone starts to write.

CONCLUSION

After conducting the research, the conclusion of the research has been explored in previous chapter in order two answer the research question. This conclusion describes problems faced by pre-service teacher in teaching the tenth grade in writing Descriptive Text. The conclusion of the research is as follow:

Problems faced by pre-service teachers can be distinguished from two categories, those are: the first categories is four steps such as building knowledge of the field (BKOF), modeling, joint construction, the independent construction of text. Building knowledge of the field (BKOF) there were the activities of greeting, reviewing the material. Modeling steps is the teacher introduced an example of

descriptive text. Joint construction is an activity involving all the students in doing exercise or reconstruction the text. The independent construction is the teacher provided the topic and a piece of paper to write the text. The second categories is Psychological problems, Linguistic Problems, and Cognitive Problems. Psychological problems is problems that occur around psychological aspects during writing. Referring to the data gained, some students had psychological problems during writing Descriptive Text such as laziness, confuse and enjoy. Linguistics problems that occur aound linguistic aspects during writing. Linguistic problems that appeared in the result of data is grammar, vocabulary and translating. Cognitive problems is problem that occurs around understanding such as generating, organizing and developing ideas or topics of the text.

REFERENCES

- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*. United States of California: Educational Research.
- Brown, H.D.2001. *Teaching by principle: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy Second Edition*. New jersey: prentice hall regents prentice – all,Inc.
- Byrne, D. (1995). *Teaching writing skills*. Singapore: Longman Publisher.
- Dawson, K., and A. Norris. 2000. *Pre-Service Teachers' Experiences In AK-12/Universitytechnology-Based Field Initiative*. Journal of Computing in Teacher Education 17, no. 1: 4–12.
- Departemen Pendidikan Nasional. 2006. *Standard Kompetensi Mata Pelajaran Bahasa Inggris Sekolah Menengah Atas (Standard Of Competence For Senior High School)*. Jakarta.
- English Language Curriculum (2013). *Komendiknas: Kempetensi dasar Kementerian Pendidikan Nasional Republik Indonesia*. Jakarta.



Ernest W. B. 1997. *13 Proven Ways to Get Your Message Across. The Essential Reference for Teachers, Trainers, Presenters, and Speakers.* California: Corwin Press, Inc., p. 22.

Gerot, Linda and Wignell. *Making Sense of Functional Grammar.* Cammeray: Antipodean Educational Enterprises, 1995.

H. Brown Douglas, *Teaching By Principles; An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy,* San Francisco: Longman, 2001.

Harmer, Jeremy. *The Practice of English Language Teaching* (3rd ed). New York: Longman, 2004. _____ . *How to Teach Writing.* New York: Longman, 2004.

Hong, J., Y. 2016. *Reaveling pre-service foreign language teachers' imagined professional identify in reflective journals.* *Language and Language Teaching Journal*, 20 (1), 59-67

Jacobsen, J. 1999. *The Creation And Evolution Of An Elementary Field-Based Reading Course: A Professor's Perspective.* *Education* 119, no. 3: 408–15.

Scrivener, Jim. *Learning Teaching: The Essential Guide to English Language Teaching,* Third Edition.

Wilson, S.M., R. Floden, and J. Mundy. 2001. *Teacher Preparation Research: Current Knowledge, Gaps, And Recommendations.* Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy Research Report, University of Washington.

