
**USING 4 SQUARE METHOD IN IMPROVING THE ABILITY OF THE
SECOND YEAR STUDENTS OF MTsN ANDALAN PEKANBARU IN
WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT**

Febrina. M, Atni Prawati, Desri Maria

English Study Program of FKIP Riau University

Abstract

This article based on the using of 4 Square Method in conducting the research “Using 4 Square Method in Improving the Ability of the Second Year Students of MTsN Andalan Pekanbaru in Writing Descriptive Text ”. The aim of this research is to improve the ability of the second year students of MTsN Andalan Pekanbaru in writing descriptive text. This research was also aim to find out whether the use of 4 Square Method in teaching writing can improve the students’ writing ability.

This study was a classroom action research. It is cycle process which consists of four stages, namely planning, action, observation and reflection. The result of post test 2 shows the average score of the students in writing descriptive text was 75. The result showed that almost all of the students were in the excellent and good level. It can be noticed that using 4 Square Method in teaching writing can improve the students’ ability in writing descriptive text at MTsN Andalan Pekanbaru.

Keyword: 4 Square Method, Descriptive Text, Improving, Writing

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the important skills in learning a language. Students are able to express their ideas, thought and feeling in writing. Writing becomes a problem for some students because writing is a complex production skill. There are many aspects should be considered in writing, such as, developing ideas, grammatical devices, choice of words, writing strategy and so on.

Hughes (1983: 33) says that through writing we can express our feelings, hopes, dreams and joys as well as our fears, angers and frustrations. It means that writing is a communication skill since there is an interactive activity.

According to KTSP of English for SMP 2006, the students are required to be able to write many kinds of genres, such as narrative, descriptive, procedure text which are useful for communicative purposes. It is stated by Bathia in Mauchlan (2005) that genre is a recognizable communicative event characterized by a set of communicative purpose(s) identified and mutually understood by the members of the professional or academic community in which it regularly occurs.

Then, researcher has interviewed the teacher of MTsN Andalan Pekanbaru who said that the students still have difficulties in writing descriptive text because they have lack of knowledge about its components such as generic structure and language features of the text, students difficult in developing ideas in written form. The students spent a lot of time to write a text. The students are also lazy to ask about what they do not understand because they are shy or lack of self confidence.

Moreover, the teachers do not have enough time to guide or give special attention to all of the students in the classroom meeting because of limited time. In MTsN Andalan Pekanbaru, the time allocation for English subject only 5 x 40 minutes a week. So, it is not enough for the teacher to correct all of the students' mistakes in writing in classroom meeting.

To solve the problem above, the teachers should evaluate students' writing intensively and use appropriate teaching method in order to improve students' ability in writing. The teacher should be able to make the students have more confidence or have awareness in asking about what they do not understand, whether to the teacher or to their friends.

Based on the phenomenon above, it is essential for the teacher to choose an appropriate strategy in teaching writing in order to help the students in writing a text. Gould (1999) suggests to use 4 Square Method to teach writing for every grade levels.

Therefore, the writer would like to do the research about how good the use of 4 Square Method in improving the ability of the second year students of MTsN Andalan Pekanbaru in writing descriptive text. This method is primarily a visual framework for assisting students with formulating ideas in an organized manner prior to write a paragraph (Gould, 1999). 4 Square Method provides a structure for writing process, giving the students the scaffolding they need in which they can put their ideas. Using this technique allows the students to focus on the content and the sub skills but not all at once. With this process, students learn to make their own structure and this then allows them to explore language and their ideas into an understandable piece of writing (Biery, 2010).

METHODOLOGY

This study is an action research. Action research is done to acquire information in order to solve the problems that are faced in certain condition or situation. According to Azhar (2006: 2), the purpose of action research is to improve students' ability or as a solution of problems in teaching learning process.

Kemmis and Taggart (1988: 5) states that an action research is a form of collective self-reflective enquiry undertake by participants in social justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situation in which the practices are carried out. The purpose of action research is to provide educational practitioners with new knowledge and resolve significant problems in classrooms and schools (Stringer in Azhar, 2006: 13). It means that the participants in action research are hoped to get more knowledge and understanding about a certain subject, therefore they will be able to solve the problems.

Action research is a process in cycle. The writers should know some steps if they want to conduct the action research. Kemmis and Taggart (1988: 10) state that there are four fundamental aspects of the action research; they are planning, action, observation, and reflection. In this research, the writer conducted one cycle design only. However, if the result is still not satisfying, the second cycle will be conducted. In this paper, the writer conducted two cycles, and every cycle consists of three meetings.

An action research is started with planning. It means that all of activities in action research must be in planning. There are many things that the writer must prepare. There some activities that done by the writer in planning, they are: arranging pre-test and post-test, preparing the lesson plan, preparing the observation sheet for teacher and students to assess how the learning condition in the class through applying 4 Square Method in teaching writing a descriptive text, preparing the observer.

In action, the writer was implement the plan that she has arranged. In this case, the writer did pre-test at the beginning of activities in teaching process to know the ability of students in writing a descriptive text before applying 4 Square Method.

Observation is important for subsequent reflection and action. There are two kinds of observation sheets that the writer used in this paper. They are students' observation sheet and teacher's observation sheet.

In students' observation sheet, the writer observes the students' activities during teaching and learning process. In teacher's observation sheet, the writer observed by the observer (an English teacher) during teaching and learning process by using 4 Square Method in writing a descriptive text

Reflecting is the last activity in data collecting technique. In this stage the writer did reflection based on the observation whether the research is success or not.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Result of Pre-Test

Before using the method, the researcher started her activity by giving Pre-Test in order to know students' ability in writing a descriptive text before they were taught by using 4 Square Method. The data was computed and the mean score was 60. Based on the result of the student's writing ability, it can be pointed out that no students were able to reach excellent level and no students got poor and very poor level. There were only 5 students or 33% who could reach the good level while the other (the majority) 10 students or 67% in the mediocre level.

Result of Research in Cycle 1

The Result of Observation and Post- Test of Cycle 1

From the result observation, it can be pointed out that the increasing number of students' involvement in class activities from the first meeting 14.4 (80%), to the second meeting 14.6 (87 %), and the third meeting 14.8 (93%) of the total number of the students in the class. Based on the result of the student's writing ability, at the end of the first cycle the number of the students who got excellent was 1 (7%). The number of students who got good level was 11 (73%). Then, there were 3 (20%) who reach the mediocre level. While the number of students who got poor and very poor level was 0 (0%). Based on the result of post- test in cycle 1, it can be pointed out that the mean score was 67.

The Result of Analysis and Reflection of Cycle 1

The result of research in cycle 1 was increasing from Pre-Test (60) to Post-Test 1 (67.00). It was not satisfying because it had not reach Minimum Criteria of Achievement (KKM; 70.00). Then, the increasing number of students' involvement in class activities from the first meeting 80%, to the second meeting 87%, and the third meeting 93% of the total number of the students in the class.

The Result of Research in Cycle 2

The Result of Observation and Post- Test of Cycle 2

Based on the result of observation, it can be pointed out that the increasing number of students' involvement in class activities from the fourth meeting 14.8 or 93%, to the fifth meeting 14.8 or 93%, and the sixth meeting 15 or 100% of the total number of the students in the class. Based on the result of post- test in cycle 2, it can be pointed out that the mean score was 75.

The Result of Analysis and Reflection of Cycle 2

At the end of this cycle, the students' achievement in writing descriptive text by using 4 Square in teaching was increasing. The increase was significant with mean score 75. This result showed that most of the students could reach the Minimum Criteria of Achievement (KKM). Then, there were also increasing number of students' involvement in class activities as it was hoped from the fourth meeting 93%, to the fifth meeting 93%, and the sixth meeting 100% of the total number of the students in the class. Therefore, the treatment was stopped and it is not necessary to continue to the next cycle.

Discussion

In conducting the research by using 4 Square Method to increase the students' ability in writing descriptive text, the researcher found some improvements of their activity from the first cycle to the second cycle. They are shown in the following table:

Table 1. The Result of Observation in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2

No	Students' Activities Observed	Cycle 1			Cycle 2		
		1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th
1.	The students draw a rectangle, width exceeding height and divided into four smaller rectangles or equal size. An additional rectangle is drawn in the center of the figure, taking up some of area in each of the other four rectangles. A total of five rectangles are thus created.	15	15	15	15	15	15
2.	The students write a complete topic sentence in the center rectangle	15	15	15	15	15	15
3.	The students write sentences in the upper- left, upper- right and lower- left rectangles that develop the thesis of the central topic.	15	15	15	15	15	15
4.	The students write a summary in the lower- right rectangle. The summary (feeling) sentence	15	15	15	15	15	15

	describes how the reader is intended to feel about the topic.						
5.	Students use four square writing to write a paragraph.	12	13	14	14	14	15
Total		72	73	74	74	74	75
Average		14.4	14.6	14.8	14.8	14.8	15
Percentage		80%	87%	93%	93%	93%	100%

From the table above, it can be seen the increasing number of students' involvement in class activities from the first meeting 14.4 (80%), the second meeting 14.6 (87%), the third meeting 14.8 (93%), the fourth meeting 14.8 (93%), the fifth meeting 14.8 (93%), and the sixth meeting 15 (100%) of the total number of the students in the class. So, it can be concluded that there were some improvements of students' activities during teaching and learning process.

Table 2. The Students' Writing Ability in Cycle 1 to Cycle 2

No.	Test	Very Poor		Poor		Mediocre		Good		Excellent	
		P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F
1.	Pre-Test	0%	0	0%	0	67%	10	33%	5	0%	0
2.	Post-Test1	0%	0	0%	0	20%	3	73%	11	7%	1
3.	Post-Test2	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	47%	7	53%	8

Based on the table above, it can be pointed out in pre- test that no students were able to reach excellent level and no students got poor and very poor level. There were only 5 students (33%) who could reach the good level while the other (the majority) 10 students (67%) in the mediocre level. the in post- test 1, the number of the students who got excellent was 1 (7%). The number of students who got good level was 11 (73%). Then, there were 3 students (20%) who reach the mediocre level. While the number of students who got poor and very poor level was 0 (0%). In post- test 2, the number of the students who got excellent was 8 (53%). The number of students who got good level was 7 (47%). While the number of students who got mediocre, poor and very poor level was 0 (0%).

Table 3. Students' Score of Pre- Test, Post- test 1 (Cycle 1) and Post- Test 2 (Cycle 2)

Pre- Test	Post- Test 1 (Cycle 1)	Post- Test 2 (Cycle 2)
60	67	75

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the mean score in Pre-Test was 60. The mean score in Post-Test 1 was 67. The mean score in Post-Test 2 was 75.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis of Pre-Test, Post-Test 1, and Post-Test 2, it can be concluded that using 4 Square Method can improve the students' ability of class VIII Asma' of MTsN Andalan Pekanbaru in writing a descriptive text. It was proven by the increase in average scores of students from 60 (Pre-Test), to 67 (Post-Test 1), and 75 (Post-Test 2).

Moreover, this teaching method also helps to improve the students' interest and motivation in writing, especially descriptive text. It can be seen from the increasing number of students' involvement in class activities from the first cycle to the end of the cycle (80% in the first meeting, 87% in the second meeting, 93% in the third meeting, 93% in the fourth meeting, 93% in the fifth meeting, and 100% in the sixth meeting of the total number of the students in the class VIII Asma'). Thus, using 4 Square Method in teaching writing is effective to improve students' ability in writing a descriptive text.

SUGGESTIONS

After finding the result of this research, some suggestions are given as follows:

First, it is suggested that in teaching writing, the English teacher may consider using the 4 Square Method as one of alternative method since the result can improve the students' writing ability.

Second, the English teacher should be able to motivate and create interesting classroom situation for the students.

Third, for the students, they have to study harder especially about the components of writing such as grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, fluency, and form or organization. They also should practice them in writing as much as possible in order to improve their ability in writing.

Finally, the researcher hopes that all findings, conclusion, and suggestions in this research will have valuable contribution to the readers.

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