

The Use of Visual Aids as Multimodal Teaching Media to Enhance Students' Skill of Writing

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ABSTRACT

Multimodal teaching media is necessary to be used in this digital era since text can appear in various forms and do not have to always be in writing consisting of rows of letters or characters. Teachers are expected to use such modes that can help them build an active, effective, and interactive learning process. This research was conducted because of the problems faced by students in writing descriptive text and the class situation during the learning process. The use of visual aids as the multimodal teaching media used by the teacher is expected can solve those problems. Therefore, this research aims at (1) improving the students' skill of writing descriptive text using visual aids; and (2) describing the class climate when visual aids are implemented in teaching writing descriptive text. The method used in this research is classroom action research. In this research, the researcher uses qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. This research used students' writing scores (pre-test and post-test) as quantitative data. The qualitative data were analyzed using assembling the data, coding the data, comparing the data, building interpretation and reporting the outcomes. The quantitative data were analyzed by the result of the test (the comparison of mean score of pre-test and post-test). The research findings show that: the use of visual aids improves the students' writing skill and the use of visual aids has a good impact on the class climate. Visual media changes the class condition to become more exciting and conducive; the students also become more active and interactive during the learning process.

1. Introduction

Writing is one of four skills in language which is an active and productive ability to deliver a language to other people by a text. In second language contexts, writing has involved the grammar, vocabulary and discourse structures of the target language, mainly where the target language is the medium of instruction in the education system or, more commonly, in higher education.

Writing as an active and productive activity is an ability to produce and deliver a language to other people by a text, but in fact, found many students got some difficulties in writing skill. The result of pre-research at one Vocational high school showed that the students got difficulties in writing skill. The problems faced by the students are: (1) the students had difficulty in developing their ideas. They cannot explore their ideas and spend much time thinking about the title, the first sentence, and so forth. So, there were only three until five sentences they wrote in one paragraph. (2) the problems in using appropriate words. They could not choose appropriate words because of the limited vocabulary they had. Some students did not want to open the dictionary and prefer to ask their friends, or the teacher that can make the class was not conducive and spent much time finishing a task. (3) the students had difficulty in writing incorrect grammar. They often made a mistake in applying the appropriate tense in the

text, so they had difficulties producing grammatically correct sentences. It made the sentences was confusing to be read. (4) the students had a problem organizing the text. Most of the students had problems in arranged the text. Their texts contained simple sentence and were not integrated.

The class climates also negatively impacted the teaching-learning process, especially in writing skills. Based on the interview and observation, the problems are: (1) The students uninterested in the teaching-learning process. They thought English was difficult to learn, so they were not interested in learning it. Most students did not have the motivation to learn English, so they kept silent and did nothing when they faced the problems. (2) the students ignored the teacher's explanation. They often did their own business unrelated to the learning process. (3) The students were not active and interactive in the teaching-learning process. The students were not active when the teacher asked questions. They were afraid to make a mistake when they answer the questions. They were only silent and did not know how to express their idea. (4) the students had low motivation in learning English. English is a foreign language in Indonesia, so the students thought it was not essential to learn. (5) the use of media was monotonous. The teacher did not use interesting media to feel bored and not enthusiastic about the learning process.

Based on this problem, the teachers can use many solutions to increase student interest in the teaching-learning process. One solution to these problems is the use of visual aids to teach students' writing skills. Serafini (2010) states that readers in schools today interact with traditional texts that contain multimodal elements, such as picture books, informational texts, magazines and newspapers, and contemporary texts containing hypertext, videos, music, and graphic designs. In fact, most contemporary written texts are accompanied by visual images. There are many visual aids, like PowerPoint presentation, paper handout, video, flip chart and others. Because of the school's situation, which is the class that will be researched in the language laboratory, the researcher decided to use PowerPoint presentation (PPT), picture and video to improve students' writing skill, especially in descriptive text. The use of visual aids is considered can improve the students' writing skill and the class situation. Therefore, this research aims to know how visual aids improve the students' writing skill and describe the class climate when visual aids are implemented in teaching writing.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Writing Skill

Writing is one of four skills in language: an active and productive ability to deliver a language to other people by a text. There is some definition about writing from several experts. Brown (1993, pp. 1) stated that writing is a process that needs some preparation, drafting and revising.

The second definition from Hanson (2009, pp. 9) stated that writing is an activity to help the students' brain to organize and reflect. Writing facilitates students to make sense of complex, multifaceted pieces of information. Such findings suggest that writing can provide a healthy and productive way to improve memory, handle trauma, offer essential life skills, and overcome life skills.

Another definition by Harris (1993, pp. 64) stated that writing is a way of expressing the self and discovering by the act of writing something more of one's individuality and social identity. In second language contexts, writing has involved the grammar, vocabulary and discourse structures of the target language, mainly where the target language is the medium of instruction in the education system or, more commonly, in higher education.

From the definitions above, it can be concluded that writing is an activity to facilitate the students in expressing their idea. It is a productive way to improve memory and overcome the life skills which needs some preparation, drafting, and revising.

2.2 Multimodal

Multimodal learning can improve students' communicative competence, cultural understanding, and attitudes. Furthermore, multimodal literacy is directed to various sources of texts that can produce meaning. Multimodal literacy attempts to understand various ways of representing knowledge and making meaning (Jewitt and Kress, 2003). The focus of multimodal literacy is on the design of discourse by investigating the contributions of various semiotic (verbal, visual, and motion) sources that are mobilized through various modalities as well as interactions and integration in the process of text coherence. Multimodal literacy considers how linguistic and visual choices meet text, audience and context objectives and how those choices work together in the organization and development of information and ideas (Lim & Tan, 2017).

2.3 Visual Aids

There are many instructional media in the teaching-learning process that can be used to support the teaching-learning process. As we know, instructional media are divided into three kinds. They are visual aids, audio aids, and audio-visual aids. The forms of

visual aids are boards, models, puppets, time board, tangible objects, photos, pictures, miniatures, clocks, wall charts, flannel boards, flashcards, poster, slides, and silent video. Then, audio aids such as tape recorder and radio. The last is audio-visual aids. It is such as television and video. All of these media can improve the teaching-learning process. The teacher should determine one of the media that will be used and consider the teaching-learning process techniques.

According to Reeves (1998, pp. 1), media is defined as all forms of communication with various formats. The media include symbol systems as diverse as printing, graphics, animation, audio, and movies in terms of teaching and learning. In education, media are the symbol system that is used to represent knowledge by the teacher and students.

Lee & Coppen (1971, pp. 1) stated that visual aids could be helpful for teachers in a number of different ways: (1) visual aids can give more variety and interest in language learning; (2) visual aids can help to provide the situations (contexts) which can make students understand the meaning of the utterances used; (3) Visual aids can encourage the students to speak the language as well as to read and write it; (4) visual aids can give information about the background of literature and life in the foreign country concerned so that the students can imagine well.

According to Yunus et al. (2013, pp. 114), there are some benefits in using visual aids in the teaching process.

- a. Visual aids in the teaching-learning process create strong engagement between students and the materials.
- b. Visual aids, such as pictures, videos, and a projector, encourage the students' interest in learning and make them easier to understand the materials.
- c. The use of visual aids acts as "vehicles" that can be used to enrich and enhance the act of writing.
- d. The use of visual aids makes the students have full concentration, leading to their understanding of the materials.
- e. Students will be more motivated in a writing activity. Most of the students do not have an interest in writing due to their difficulties.

3. Methodology

This research is implemented in SMK Farmasi Nasional, a vocational high school in Surakarta, Central Java, Indonesia. The participants of the research were the tenth-grade students, which consisted of 3 males and 27 females. This research used Classroom Action Research (CAR). Wallace (1998, pp. 4) stated that action research collects data on the teacher's practice and analyses it to decide what the teacher future practise should be. According to Kemmis and Mc Taggart in Burns (2010, pp. 7-8), the steps of action research typically involve four broad stages in a cycle of research: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The first cycles can be continuous or repeated. The spiral of cycles repeated until the researcher has achieved a satisfactory result and decided to stop it.

In this research, the researcher uses qualitative and quantitative techniques for collecting the data. The researcher used qualitative data, including observation, diary, audio recording, transcription, interviews, questionnaires, and photographs. The researcher also used students' writing scores (pre-test and post-test) as quantitative data. In analyzing qualitative data, The score is compared to show whether there is an improvement of the students' writing skill or not. This research was divided into two cycles. Each cycle consists of two meetings. After each cycle was done, the researcher conducted a post-test to know the students' writing skill improvement.

4. Results and Discussion

The writer got the pre-research data by observing the class, interviewing the students and the teacher, giving a questionnaire, and doing a pre-test. The writer could identify four main problems from a tenth-grade class in writing skill from these activities. The problems are The difficulties of developing the ideas, the use of vocabulary, the use of grammar, and the difficulties of organizing the text. The problems of the class climate are: The students were not interested in the teaching-learning process, the classroom situation was very noisy, the students were not active and interactive in the teaching-learning process, the students had low motivation in learning English, and the use of media was monotonous. It can be seen in table 1.

Table 1 Pre-research Findings

Problem Indicators	
A	1. The students find it difficult to developing their ideas
Writing Competence	2. The students had problems in using proper words (appropriate vocabulary) in writing.
	3. The students had difficult to write in correct grammar

	4. The students had problem in organizing the text.
B Class Climate	1. The students were not interested in teaching learning process.
	2. Classroom situation was very noisy.
	3. The students were not active and interactive in teaching learning process.
	4. The students had low motivation in learning English.
	5. The using of media was monotonous.

Based on the problems, the writer designed learning activities using visual aids to teach writing. The learning activities were divided into two cycles and one post-test. Each cycle consisted of two meetings. After each cycle was done, the researcher conducted the final post-test. In preparing the materials using visual aids, the writer arranged the learning activities to make sure that they could overcome the problems of writing skill. It can be seen in table 2.

Table 2 The List Activities Using Visual Aids

No	Activities	The Aims	Problem Indicators being addressed	Cycle/ Meeting
1	The students are asked to see a picture and mentions some vocabularies from the picture	To check the students' vocabulary that they had	A1, B2, B3, B4, B5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C 1/ M1, M2 • C 2/ M3, M4
2	The students write the difficult word from the picture on the white board/book	To build the students' interest and to make them active	A2, B3, B5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C 1/ M1, M2 • C 2/ M3, M4
3	The students find out the meaning of difficult word in the dictionary	a. To improve students' vocabularies b. To make the students active	A2, B2, B3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C 1/ M1, M2 • C 2/ M3, M4
4	The students pay attention to the explanation of the teacher using PPT	To give explanation about: 1. Social function 2. Generic structure 3. Language feature 4. Descriptive text	A3, A4, B1, B2, B4, B5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C 1/ M1, M2 • C 2/ M3, M4
5	The students are asked to write the important point from the explanation of the teacher	a. To improve students understanding about the materials b. To make the students active	A3, A4, B1, B2, B3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C 1/ M1, M2 • C 2/ M3, M4
6	The teacher shows some videos and the students are asked to write the vocabularies that they get.	To check the understanding of videos each of students	A1, A2, B1, B2, B3, B4, B5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C 1/ M1, M2 • C 2/ M3, M4
7	The students find out the meaning of the vocabularies that they get	a. To improve students' vocabularies b. To make the students active	A2, B2, B3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C 1/ M1, M2 • C 2/ M3, M4
8	The students are asked to write a sentence using the vocabularies that they get from the videos and pictures	a. To improve the students' ability in writing b. To make the students active	A1, B2, B3, B5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C 1/ M1, M2 • C 2/ M3, M4
9	Students are asked to write the sentence on the white board	To investigate the students' writing skill	B1, B3, B4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C 1/ M1, M2 • C 2/ M3
10	The students are asked to arrange their sentence in a good generic structure	To improve the student's ability in arranging the	A1, A3, A4, B2, B3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C 1/ M1, M2 • C 2/ M3, M4

		sentence		
11	The students are guided by the teacher in writing a descriptive text correctly by watching the video	a. To improve the student's ability in writing skill. b. To improve the understanding in arranging the sentence	A1, B1, B2, B3, B5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C 1/ M2 • C 2/ M4
12	The students are asked to write the outline of descriptive text, and develop their outline into a text using their own words	To make the students active	A1, A2, A3, A4, B2, B3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C 1/ M2 • C 2/ M4
13	In pairs, students are asked to exchange their work, and they asked to give comment to the text	To evaluate or critique their work each other	A3, B3, B4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C 1/ M1, M2 • C 2/ M4

The table shows the learning activities using visual aids to improve students writing skill. The first and second column explained the activities and the study's goal. The third column indicates the problems that can be addressed from the learning activities. Table 3 showed how the indicator of the problem could be solved to make it clearer.

Table 3 Problem Indicator as being addressed by Visual Aids Activity

Problem Indicators		Visual Aids Activities
A Writing Competence	1. The students find it difficult to developing their ideas	6, 8, 10, 11, 12,
	2. The students had problems in using proper words (appropriate vocabulary) in writing.	1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 12,
	3. The students had difficult to write in correct grammar	4, 5, 10, 12, 13,
	4. The students had problem in organizing the text.	4, 5, 10, 12,
B Class Climate	1. The students are not interested in teaching learning process.	4, 5, 6, 9, 11
	2. Classroom situation is very noisy.	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12
	3. The students are not active and interactive in teaching learning process.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13
	4. The students have low motivation in learning English.	1, 4, 6, 9, 13
	5. The using of media is monotonous.	1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 11

From table 3 above, it can be seen that the problem indicators can be solved with some visual aids' activities. Based on these activities, it is expected to overcome the students' problems and improve their writing skills. In cycle 1, the researcher prepared the lesson plan about the descriptive text for two meetings. The writer also prepared the materials such as PowerPoint presentation, pictures, and video. Also, the media such as laptops, LCD, and loudspeakers are used in the teaching-learning process.

In the first meeting, the topic was about "part of the house" and the text was descriptive. They learned about the definition, social function, the generic structure and the language features of descriptive text. They learned about simple present tense and tried to make the sentence using the formulas on the whiteboard. They also given examples of the descriptive text and tried to find the generic structure of the text and found the meaning of difficult words. The use of visual aids in meeting 1 made the students interested in the teaching-learning process.

In the second meeting, the students learned about how to make a descriptive text. The students were given an example of the text and learned about the generic structure and they tried to make a descriptive text in pairs. After fifteen minutes, the students could make a descriptive text about the house, but some students were still confused in using appropriate vocabulary.

The finding of cycle 1 showed some points found in the actions. First, the students were active in the teaching-learning process. They participated when the teacher asked some questions. Some of students were enthusiastic when they answered the question. Some of the students finished every task and activities eagerly. They could manage their concentration during the learning process. All of them felt enjoy and happy. Second, the students could improve their writing skill. The post-test 1 indicated that the students' writing skills were increasing. They could develop their ideas became a good paragraph.

Third, most students were still confused in choosing appropriate words. They usually translate using the dictionary or electronic dictionary without regard to the context. It made the text was confused with being read. Fourth, many students despaired easily when faced the difficult task. They often gave up and asked the teacher or friends' answer without finding it first. Some of them kept silent and waited for the discussion. The last, the students could not manage the time when they finished the task. They were wasting time asking each other, so the class became noisy. Because there were still problems faced in the teaching and learning process in cycle 1, the researcher planned cycle 2 to solve the students' problems and improve students' writing skills.

Cycle 2 consisted of two meetings and one post-test. The time allotment for each meeting was 80 minutes. The genre discussed was still descriptive text, but the topic was describing people. In the third meeting, the students were given a stimulus using video and pictures to improve their writing skills. The use of video gave an example of describing people in the simplest ways. After that, the students were asked to describe their friends. Some of the students could finish their task quickly. They were asked to read their text in front of the class. The students S02 made a mistake using a possessive adjective, so the teacher explained it. After the explanation, the students should check their text and correct it.

In the fourth meeting, the teacher showed the text about describing people. The students were asked to read and found some difficult word in the text. After that, the teacher opened the discussion and only a few students asked the difficult words of the text. The teacher explained the grammar roles of descriptive text in the next activity again. After all students understood and did not have a question about it, the students were given a picture containing many people. They should choose at least five people to be described. After fifteen minutes, some of students finished their task. In the next instruction, the students should choose one person of five pictures to be described more using their own word. The teacher looked around and helped the students to finish their task. The teacher asked the students to pay attention to their spelling and mechanic. In the last ten minutes, all students could finish their text.

The observation findings of the second cycle of the research showed that improvements from the first cycle. The students could make a good paragraph about descriptive text. The vocabulary used in their writing was better than before. The students also used their time effectively to finish their task faster than before and had more time to check the spelling and mechanic. The grammar of the text was also better than before. These improvements were supported by the mean score of the test in cycle 2. The mean score of post-test cycle 2 was 81.13. It was better than the mean score of post-test 1 that was only 71.46.

The improvement of students' score can be seen in Table 4, as follows:

Table 4. The Improvement of the Students' Achievement

Sub Cycle	Observation	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
Kind of Test	Pre-test	Post-test 1	Post-test 2
Students' mean score	53.81	71.46	81.13

The classroom situation of the second cycle also had an improvement. First, most of the students became more active. Before the treatments, they looked embarrassed and did not want to answer the teacher' questions. They were not confident to speak using English because they were afraid to make a mistake. After that, they wanted to answer the question using a mixed language, Indonesian and English. Second, all of the students became more focused on the learning process. It made the class situation became more conducive and active.

Based on the research findings, the result of the research showed the improvement of students' writing skill and classroom situation. The improvement of students' writing skill shows that the students could make descriptive text with longer paragraph and detailed information. The visual aids could stimulate and develop their idea into descriptive text. (2) The students can choose the appropriate word in specific contexts by using videos and pictures containing some vocabularies. (3) By PowerPoint presentation, the teacher explained grammar and then the students practise making sentences. This treatment improved students' understanding of writing descriptive text. (4) The students could arrange their text to be well-organized, consisting of identification and description. The use of video guides the students to write the descriptive text in good order because it systematically describes from the beginning until ending.

The use of visual aids also improves the classroom situation. Firstly, the students looked more interested in the teaching-learning process. The use of visual media made the classroom activity more interesting than before. The students were happy and not bored during the learning process. The classroom situation also became more conducive. This happened because they were more interested in learning activities than chatting or doing something else. Another improvement, the students became more active and interactive. The students' motivation in learning English also improved. It can be seen from students' activity in learning English. They did not shy when asked about the learning process about what they did not understand. The use of the English language in classroom activity was improved. They were not afraid to talk using simple English conversation. They were also aware that learning English was important. The use of visual media changed the class climate became more interesting, so the students were not bored and free from monotonous activity during the learning process

5. Conclusion

The research showed that the uses of visual aids as multimodal teaching media could improve students' skill in writing descriptive text. It covers: (1) the students could develop their ideas easily. They made a descriptive text with longer paragraph and detailed information. (2) the students used more appropriate vocabulary in writing. (3) the students wrote descriptive text using grammatically correct sentences. (4) the students could arrange their text is well-organized, which consists of identification and description. The mean score of the pre-test was 53.81 and it improved to 71.46 in the post-test 1 and 81.13 in the post-test 2. So, post-test 1 and 2 have passed the minimum requirement criterion (KKM) of that school that is 68.00. It showed that visual aids in teaching writing descriptive text could improve the students' writing skill. As Kang states, visual aids are designed to help learners, bring previous knowledge level of consciousness in form organizational structure, help enhance comprehension and learning, and elicit, explain, and communicate information. Since most people are visual learners, that is important to go beyond the spoken words when educating students. Students are more likely to learn the material they exposed to in various ways.

There use of visual aids has a good impact on the class climate. It can be seen from the positive improvement in the class situation during the teaching-learning process. It can be indicated by: the students looked more interested in the teaching-learning process; the classroom situation also became more conducive. This happened because they were more interested in learning activity rather than chatting or doing something else; another improvement, the students became more active and interactive when the teacher gave some question and task; the students' motivation in learning English also improved; the use of English language in classroom activity was improved. They were not afraid to talk using simple English conversation; the students were also aware that learning English was important; visual media also changed the class climate and became more interesting, so the students were not bored and free from monotonous activity during the learning process. Carney and Levin (2002, pp. 20) demonstrated that visual materials make a difference in the teaching and learning process because they serve as metal scaffolds for students and help teachers to connect and coordinate accurate concepts so that learning is more engaging.

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