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# **EFFECT OF USING CUE CARDS TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' SKILLS IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXTS AT THE TENTH GRADE STUDENTS OF MA MA'ARIF 06 PASIR SAKTI**

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## **Abstract**

The objective of this research is to find whether there is effect or not of using cue cards to improve students' skills in writing descriptive texts for the tenth grade students of MA Ma'arif 06 Pasir Sakti. The research method was experimental class which conducted between the students of X IPS 1 and X IPS 2 as the subject. The tenth grade of IPS 1 was taught using cue cards while the tenth grade of IPS 2 was taught without using cue cards. Based on the result of data analysis, the research findings are: (1) The cue cards is more effective for teaching writing descriptive text than without using cue cards for tenth grade students of MA Ma'arif 06 Pasir Sakti; (2) The students' writing was improving after cue cards was applied. It can be concluded that cue cards is an effective media used to improve the writing skill of the tenth grade students of MA Ma'arif 06 Pasir Sakti.

*Keywords: Cue card, Writing skill and Descriptive text*

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In today's world writing becomes one of skills that are very significant (Weigle, 2002: 1). It is usually used as a Principle in communicating. Therefore writing also becomes one of skills to communicate in daily life that much needed in this modern era as. Taylor (2009: 2) said that writing is the seed, the fruit and the pickle of our understanding. It means that writing is highly complex for English language learners because the learners should find their ideas, elaborate, record on their brain, and keep. When writing, the learners have the same difficulty such as; they do not know what should they write and do not have any ideas or they have ideas but do not know how to elaborate. The learners also have some difficulties in some aspects, such as they should pay attention in higher level skills of spelling, word choice, punctuation, and so on. According to Grenville (2001) Writing sounds simple - you start with an attention-grabbing first sentence, then you move on to some really interesting stuff in the middle, and then you bring it all together at the end. The trouble is, how

do you think up that attention-grabbing first sentence? Where do you go to find that really interesting stuff? What do you do if your mind is as blank as the paper you're staring at? In other words, writing is a skill that is very difficult because in writing we need more imaginations or ideas. If the students are lack knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, they will feel that writing is very difficult and so hard because in writing there is also need logical thinking and express ideas. The students feel difficulty when they should generate their ideas. They still do not know how to elaborate their ideas in writing. From which idea they should start writing. Writing is not only writing or combining word with other word but in writing there should be logical thinking and express ideas. It also needs to pay attention on content, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation spelling, etc. Because of those problems, writing becomes one of the important subjects in English language curriculum. The students also do not have enough motivation to study English because some students are not

ready when the class was about to begin, they lack of vocabulary, grammar, etc. There are some types of writing such as; descriptive, narrative, recount, report, expository, procedure, reports, news item, and anecdote. For the research, the writer chooses the descriptive text because descriptive text is one of texts that should be learn by the tenth grade students of senior high school. The writer also wants to know students ability in writing descriptive before and after cue cards applied in the class. Zahara (2014: 3) said that descriptive text is a kind of text which describes person, place, thing, animal, or others as the reader can feel, see, hear or touch it. In other word in descriptive text students should elaborate their ideas into sentences. Besides that descriptive text consists of identification and description. Identification is the part of paragraph that introduces the character, and description is the part of paragraph that describes the character. In writing descriptive text, the students often find some difficulties. The difficulty is in organizing the ideas. They do not clearly understand what descriptive text is. They lack knowledge of grammar, spelling and vocabulary. So they were passive and feel bored in writing learning process, especially to write descriptive text. They usually write the sentences in Bahasa first, and then they would translate in English. Therefore, the professional teachers are demanded to be more creative in teaching in order to make students enthusiastic in studying English especially English writing so that the students will not think that to learn English is difficult.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Writing is one of four language skills that is very important in the teaching learning process. Since writing can help students learn a foreign language and it can be used for communication into written or readable text. Commonly students get difficulties in finding, organizing, and generating ideas; they feel confused to start their writing. Moreover the students have low

motivation, lack of vocabulary, grammar and seem uninterested in writing. Writing, as part of communication, is an important subject which needs to express and share their ideas, knowledge, feeling and information (Novia, 2015: 1). When begin to write, learners need to get and organize the ideas, write the paragraph, revise and write again into good composition and also readable text. According to Harmer (2001: 79) writing is as a skill: by far the most important reason for teaching writing, of course, is that it is a basic language skill, just as important as speaking, listening, and reading. Most of the students consider that writing is the hardest skill to master, because the ability to write in foreign language is more complicated than the ability to speak, read, or listen. It means that writing is very important to be learned.

There are four categories of written performance as Brown (2004: 220) states. The first is imitative. In this type of writing the students must achieve skills in the fundamental tasks of writing letters, correctly spelling words, punctuation marks, and constructing very brief sentences. The second is intensive (controlled). The students must achieve skills in producing appropriate vocabulary within a context, collocations and idioms, and correct grammatical features up to the length of a sentence. The third is Responsive. The students must achieve skills in responding the pedagogical directives, lists of criteria, outlines, and other guidelines, demonstrating the ability to connect sentences into paragraph and creating a logically connected sequence of two or three paragraphs. The last is extensive. The students must achieve a purpose, organizing and developing ideas logically, using details to support or illustrate ideas, demonstrate syntactic and lexical variety, and engaging in the process of multiple drafts to achieve a final product up to the length of essay, term paper, major research project report, or thesis.

Brown (2004:226) states that a variety of cue cards controlled tasks have been used in English classrooms around the world. The main advantage in this media is in detaching almost ubiquitous reading and writing connection and offering instead a nonverbal means to stimulate written responses. They state that cue cards are simple, easy to procedure, and able to use many times. Even though cue cards are simple Medias, it still appropriates in the class especially in students at the tenth grade of senior high school. Cue cards are the media used during the learning process in the class. The objective of using this kind of media is to help in elaborating their ideas in writing. It can be used in some different ways: individually, pair work, and group work. It can also be used as small cards that contain of pictures or photos completed by words as the clues. By giving cue cards to students, it will help students to elaborate their ideas. When the students can understand cue cards, they will be able to elaborate ideas by themselves in writing.

Diannita (2015:15) states that descriptive text is a text which is describing a particular person, place; or thing in such way. In other words, it can expand our experience because in descriptive text would describe about person, place, or thing. It can be conclude that descriptive text is a text for describing person, place or a thing by visual experience that the reader can visualize the topic and enter into the writer experience because in writing descriptive someone needs any visual experiences. The generic structure of descriptive text consists of identification and description. Identification: Identifies phenomenon to be described. This part consist of identification of a particular thing that being describe. This part identifies what is the topic about and what is the text about. Description: Describes parts, qualities, characteristics, etc. This part describes the characteristic of thing that being described. The writer must have a good imagination about that thing that will be describe (Masitoh and

Suprijadi, 2015: 41). There are also some features in descriptive text; the first, descriptive text usually use verb in the present tense, Use of Simple Past Tense if Extinct. The second, Although present tense may be used in literary description, it is past tense that tends to dominate. The third, relational verbs are used when classifying and describing appearance/qualities and parts/function of phenomenon. The fourth, it also uses action verbs 'Material Processes' (It eats grass, It runs fast). It is used when describing behaviors/ users. The fifth, mental verbs are used when describing feeling in literary descriptions. The last, it also uses descriptive adjectives (strong legs, white fangs), etc. (Masitoh and Suprijadi, 2015: 41).

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

In this study, the researcher used an experiment research design. This research is about improving students' English writing skill using cue cards. The researcher started from the problems that the students got. After the research done, the researcher hoped that the problems can be solved. For those reasons, the researcher applied experiment research. Fraenkel and Wallen (2009: 261) state that experimental research is unique in two very important respects: It is the only type of research that directly attempts to influence a particular variable, and when properly applied, it is the best type for testing hypotheses about cause and effect relationships. In an experimental study, researchers look at the effect(s) of at least one independent variable on one or more dependent variables. The independent variable in experimental research is also frequently referred to as the experimental, or treatment, variable. The dependent variable, also known as the criterion, or outcome, variable, refers to the results or outcomes of the study. So in experimental research the researcher would give any tests such as pre test, treatment and post test whether to know the influence of teaching

use cue cards in class or teaching without cue cards. In this research, Independent variable (X) was cue cards used in writing descriptive text at the tenth grade students of MA MA'ARIF 06 Pasir Sakti and dependent variable (Y) was students' ability in writing descriptive text at the tenth grade students of MA MA'ARIF 06 Pasir Sakti.

The samples of this research were X IPS 1 as experimental class, which consisted of 25 students and X IPS 2 as control class, which consisted of 25 students. It was 50 % of the populations. It was chosen as the subject of the research because the students experienced some problems in learning English and they were less motivation in learning English.

The research instrument was a writing test. The writer made it first before the test and treatment were conducted. The pre test and the post test were the instruments in getting the data and treatment was given both for experimental and control group. The aim of this research was to know whether there was an improvement of students' writing skill or not. There are two kinds of test. Those are pre-test and post-test. The pre-test is used before the cue cards were applied in the class whether to know the students' writing skill at that time. The post-test is used after cue cards are applied in the class whether to know the result of students' writing skill.

Collecting the data is the most important activity in the research in collecting data. It is held to find out the improvement of students' writing ability using cue cards as the media to help them in elaborating and organizing their ideas in writing. The result of pre-test and post-test will be collected to support the analyzing data. The data will be analyzed by students' writing test. The researcher uses analytical scoring rubric adapted from Weigle (2002: 116). There are five components presented in the analytical scoring rubric for writing, i.e., content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and

mechanics. In this study, the writer combined vocabulary and grammar.

#### **4. DISCUSSION**

In this research, the writer chose the sample at grade tenth at MA Ma'arif 06 Pasir Sakti Lampung Timur; they were two classes (IPS1 and IPS 2). Class IPS 1 is as the experimental class and class IPS 2 is as control class. Pre-tests and post-tests were conducted for both experimental and control classes. Treatment was conducted for both after the writer gave the pre-test. Experimental class taught by using cue cards while control class taught without using cue cards. After that, the writer analyzed students' worksheet of both classes and found the total of right answer to be calculated into the score and then compared the result of the students' pre-test and post test score. The writer gave pre-test first to the students before doing a treatment for experimental class. It conducted in order to know the students' writing ability before given treatments. The result of mean score of pre-test in experimental class was 54.72. After cue cards was applied in the class for three meetings, the result of post-test was different from pre-test. The result of mean score of post-test in experimental class was 76.8. Those number showed that the calculation of post-test is higher than the calculation of pre-test. It means that there was a significance difference of students' achievement in pre-test and post-test after the writer conducted the treatment by using cue cards in experimental class. The students' ability taught by using cue cards was improving. The cue cards arised the student' motivation to get ideas, think, feel, and express them into written. By using cue cards, students could express their ideas or imagination freely. It was clearly seen that there was an improvement in students' writing ability of experimental class, it was happened because the experimental class had been given the treatments by using cue cards. Therefore it can be summarized that teaching writing

descriptive text by using cue cards in experimental class was successful.

While in the control class the writer also gave pre-test before the treatments the same as experimental class. The result of mean score of pre-test was 50,08. After the pre-test was conducted to control class, she did treatments in control class without using cue cards for three meetings. The result of mean score of post-test in control class was 56,2. After she gave them treatment without using cue cards, the result of the post-test was different from pre-test but students' ability in writing did not really improve. Therefore it can be summarized that the lowest score and the highest score in the post-test is higher than in the pre-test but students' ability still did not really improve. It meant that teaching writing descriptive text without using cue cards in control class was not successful. It was clearly seen that there was an improvement in students' writing ability of experimental class, it was happened because the experimental class had been given the treatments by using cue cards. The writer found that teaching writing descriptive text by using cue cards better than without using cue cards. It means that the students were more interested to write using cue cards rather than without using cue cards. By using cue cards students could develop their writing achievement because they used cue cards that containing same clues, the clues in the cue cards would help student to elaborate the ideas and also they would be more interested in learning writing.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The objective of this research is to find out whether there is effect or not of using cue cards to improve students' skills in writing descriptive texts for the tenth grade students of MA Ma'arif 06 Pasir Sakti. After conducting the research, researcher is able to clarify that the using of cue cards is able to improved students' skill in writing descriptive texts. Based on the data which

is obtained from the research finding previously, it can be concluded that the mean score of students who were taught writing descriptive text by using cue cards was 76.8. Therefore, taught writing descriptive text by using cue cards for students improved their ability in writing descriptive text. For mean score of the students who were taught writing descriptive text without using cue cards was 56.2. Therefore the students' achievements that were taught writing descriptive text without using cue cards did not really improve while the mean score of pre test was 50.08. And for t-test level significant 0.01 or 1% and 0.05 or 5 % showed that t-obtained value was 5.16 and P-value were 2.4066 and 1.6772, so there was a significant difference in the students' achievement between those who were taught writing descriptive text by using cue cards and those who were taught writing descriptive text without using cue cards. It meant that using cue cards in teaching writing descriptive text to the tenth grade students of MA MA'ARIF 06 Pasir Sakti in the academic year 2016/2017 was effective.

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