THE EFFECT OF WORD WALL METHOD ON STUDENTS’ WRITING ABILITY

Hetty Zaharani
Department of English Education
University of Potensi Utama Medan, North Sumatera
tyzaharani@gmail.com

Abstract: Writing is one of the important skills in teaching English. But in writing, there are some obstacles to construct sentences and express ideas. Usually, the common problems are lack of knowledge about grammar, vocabulary, and content. Many people are restricted by their skill of writing and caused them can not express their idea in writing. Many great ideas cannot breakthrough because they were never been written or show up. To face this common problem, there must be some ways and solutions to improve the students’ writing ability, in this case, the researcher used the word wall method in helping students to improve their writing ability. This research aims to figure out whether the word wall method can improve students’ writing ability. The subject of this research was the tenth students of Nahdatul Ulama’s School in the academic year 2020/2021 that consisted of 40 students in X class, 22 females and 18 males. Based on the result of the research, the writing ability of the students was increased by applying the word wall method in the first cycle. In the pre-test, before treatment, the mean figure was 38. After applying the word wall method in cycle 1, the figure increased to 57 and in the cycle, the mean figure achieved 82 points. It could be stated that the students got a significant improvement in their writing ability. This condition occurred because some weaknesses that appeared in cycle one had been revised and implemented well in cycle two. It could be concluded that the effect of the word wall method could be able to change positively the writing ability of students with significantly value.

Keywords: Writing Ability and Word Wall Method.

I. INTRODUCTION

Concerning the fact that English is a global language with huge benefits, Indonesia as one of the southeast Asian countries puts English as an important subject to be taught at school. In formal school, students in Indonesia have been learning English since kindergarten school. It confirms that students have known English since an early age. Even the students’ ability of English is still not satisfied after through 9 years of learning as a government obligation for children. If We compare to our neighbor’s countries as Singapore, Malaysia, Philippine, etc, our ability of English is still lacking far behind.

In this globalization period, it is a must for people to have the ability to communicate using an international language. One of the most important international languages to be
mastered is the English language. Almost every nation in the world uses English as an international communication language. Interlanguage is used as the main tool of cross-country communication among speakers of many nations (Fromkin, Rodman, Hyams, 2007:433). In addition, English is also a universal language of instruction used in almost every corner of the world (Prayoga, Sutarsyah & Ginting, 2017:2). The importance of English as an international language cannot be denied by people who want to make good communication with people abroad.

Generally, students are supposed to master four essential skills of English, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Based on the latest curriculum of teaching English in Indonesia especially for Eight grade students, one of the basic competencies in learning the language is that the students can write a text in the correct form. This capability only can be earned by developing the students’ writing ability. Writing is one of the four main skills that students need to develop to communicate with others successfully. Writing is the written expression of thoughts, desires, emotions, and schemes; and this requires skill rather than knowledge (Oz, 2006: 251). Writing is a skill to make coherent words on paper to compose a paragraph or text. Developing written skills will enable students to learn how to compose ideas and share information. Acquiring this skill will also prepare students for their future academic and professional careers. But it is not so comfortable for students to write when they face obstacles as good grammar and express idea. Oshima and Hogue (1983:79) stated that Starting to write is the most difficult part. This is because writing is not just copying or pasting the words and sentences, but the most essential is developing and pouring thoughts into a writing structure (Fauziati, 2015:123). Bell & Burnaby (as cited in Nunan, 1989:74) also mentioned that the complexity of writing is based on high cognitive thinking which a writer must demonstrate and control the variables of writing simultaneously. Writing also needs good grammar and organization of words (Oshima & Hogue, 1983:1), so it requires precision and placement to structure and integrate information into synchronous paragraphs and text.

Brown (2004: 218) emphasized that writing ability has become an indispensable skill in the Millenium stage. It is concerned to ability in expressing ideas in written form. It can be an assistant tool for children to explore, organize, and enhance ideas (saddler, et al, 2018). As matter of fact, many people choose writing as an effective and efficient communication instrument for making a business letter, email, and important information in a company's
product. Therefore, people can save time to communicate orally. The other writer Sipayung (2016: 21) stated that through writing, the writer and the reader indirectly will build a new social relationship. From the explanation above, writing is a vital communication tool between writers or idea owners and readers.

In Indonesia, writing English is a very important skill for students to master it as speaking fluently, reading clearly, listening correctly. As stated in Curriculum 2013, that English teachers must focus on competency improvement of students who apply the language in achieving communication goals in various contexts, both spoken and written in the simple form. Its means speaking and writing must be mastered equally.

In the English syllabus, the Curriculum 2013 also set out the purpose of writing can record the events that have been experienced, describe objects, people, and places around us. The students must be able to write activities or objects regularly in the form of text. Therefore, the curriculum requires students to have the capability in writing any kind of genre in simple text.

Many factors can influence the level of a student’s ability to write, such as internal and external factors. Internal factors consist of talent, interest, motivation, personality, etc. External factors consist of teacher’s ability, facility of school, learning media as a computer, education program, and learning strategy. Learning strategy can be defined as the general patterns of activities teachers and students in the embodiment of teaching and learning activities to achieve the objectives that have been stated. The purpose of the learning strategy is to improve the student’s quality towards an intelligent and reliable human.

Based on an interview with the English teachers who teach English at tenth grade of Nahdatul Ulama’s School, students have difficulty in English writing. It is caused by a lack of ideas and how to write correctly. Generally, if the teacher can apply a learning strategy that is suitable for the student’s condition, it will make students have passion for learning English writing. This situation could lift their ability to master the material. But there are still some students who have difficulty in mastering the material. That has been taught. Kusuma and Adiyan (2016 :14) stated that motivation greatly influences one’s success in learning a second language and a foreign language. They also do not memorize a lot of vocabulary lead unclear sentences that could create misunderstanding or confusion for readers (Luke & Oktriono, 2015 :689). This problem occurs because students have difficulty in writing good English.
In addition to the problems above, the method used by the teacher is a conventional method that makes students have less interest that affects their ability to write correctly. The teacher just explained the function of grammar without a chance to apply it. This statement is also supported by Hasibuan (2013) in Damayanti (2019: 3) stated that learning depends on the teacher as an information center and students only accept material passively. Consequently, the students cannot make their own words to write the text because the teacher does not help the students to develop their idea.

According to a study by Khotimah & Suryandari (2015:495), writing activity faces some difficulties as determining the title based on the given theme, the difficulty in taking the main idea, and the difficulty in developing the paragraph. They are caused by an inability to express the writers’ ideas. The other reason is a misunderstanding about the theme and low cognitive thought. To fix that matters, effective media will be required to help them confirm the ideas into a form of writing. An effective media here is a visual tool to facilitate teachers in delivering the material. As Sari & Sari (2015:28) said, using media to study is the best solution to make students absorb what is given by the teacher quickly.

Considering the above problems, the researcher chose the word wall method as a strategy using media in the teaching-learning process. Word wall is simple and easy media to use. It is cheap but effective. It is suitable for the school which has limited media to teach English. The teachers do not need to spend too much money on making media. Word wall can help the students to have a good writing process and finally could make students have good capability in writing.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher tries to apply the word wall method as a technique to improve the writing ability of the Tenth-grade students in Nahdatul Ulama’s School.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Definition of Word Wall

Word Wall is an attractive display that uses two or three dimension media such as a chart, bulletin board, or another exhibition medium (Cronsberry, 2004:3). These words are continually displayed in activities between students and teachers in the classroom or around
school or campus. According to Galih (as cited in Kasim, 2013:22), this media is designed to be a synergistic tool for students and contained some references or slang that can be used during writing. It will strengthen them to learn fiery in the classroom. They can practice some new words each day by looking at them, saying, repeating, clapping, chanting the letters, writing the words on paper or whiteboard, and self-correcting the words with the teacher (Hall & Cunningham as cited in Jasmine & Schiesl, 2009:4).

According to Widikasih (2008:14), Word Wall has some advantages. 1) It will improve students' ability in memorizing the vocabulary and organize sentences. 2) It contains The reference at the word wall will support their writing capability during the English classes. This advantage will help students to deliver their ideas in writing. 3) This media can also assist students in developing paragraphs referred to the given theme. 4) It also provides many activities that allow students to practice writing instantly and automatically.

A word wall is a collection of words with high-frequency sight for appropriate students, classified or categories, and is located on the wall of a classroom for students to easily see and memorize (Brabham & Villaume, 2001; Copper & Kiger, 2003). Additionally, Green (1993) stated that word wall inspires students to manage and provide a rich environment of various important words for students, and can be a fascinating tool to socialize group learning. Regarding the definition above, a word wall is a systematically organized collection of words displayed in large letters, attractive and colorful on a wall or other large display place that usually all students could see every moment within the classroom. It is a tool to enhance students' English ability, not just display as an advertisement.

This research needs to reveal whether word wall media is appropriate to overcome students’ obstacles in writing. This research also will help the teachers to practice the appropriate learning media in the class. Considering those reasons, the researcher is interested to understand the effect of the Word Wall method on students’ writing ability.

**Word Wall Strategy**

It is not enough just have a word wall in the classroom. You have to 'manage' the word wall (Cunningham, 2000). Teachers cannot simply put up words somewhere in the classroom
and tell students to use them. Manage a word wall means being selective and limiting the words that are essential to the material of study. Manage a word wall means making the words accessible by putting them where students can see them with high frequency. It is like in front of door, beside the whiteboard, on the students’ table, etc. Manage a word wall means adding interesting words gradually; Cunningham (2000) suggests adding five words a week. Manage a word wall means students have time to practice and to write with the words. Manage a word wall means there will always be evaluated the result of a word wall method. Teachers who 'manage' word walls has to report the result of students who can learn pasted words. A Word wall strategy also can analyse and review the result of students’ ability in writing after a period.

**Descriptive Text**

In this study, the researcher will be focused on descriptive text for the tenth-grade students of Senior High School at Nahdatul Ulama’s School. According to Emilia (2011), descriptive text is a kind of text that has a purpose to give information about something or someone. In Descriptive text, the researcher describe person, object, appearances, landscape, or phenomenon naturally so they can make the reader imagine and feel it (Alwasilah and Alwasilah: 2007). Wardiman, et. al. (2008) divided the structure of descriptive text into two-part as introduction and description. An introduction is the part of the paragraph that introduces the character, while the description is the part of the paragraph that describes the character.

Descriptive text is the basic material in increasing students’ ability in writing. It is believed that descriptive text is the way to learn English in the tenth grade and that is suitable for the beginner level. Descriptive text is a piece of writing that is intended to deliver meaning to the reader through sensory students of provided images. Additionally, descriptive text is a paragraph that is defined as a group of sentences that are closely related in thought and which serve one comment process often used to describe what a person looks like and acts like, what a place looks like, and what an object looks like (Asih, 2013). Furthermore, a descriptive paragraph is a typewritten text paragraph, which has the specific function to describe an object and it has the aim that is describing the object to the reader clearly.

Descriptive text is a kind of text with a purpose to give information. The context of this kind of text is the description of a particular thing, animal, person, or other. It is a text that
describes a particular thing such as a scene, an animal, person, or something that happens in nature (Winch, 2014). Writing descriptive text is a process to gather our ideas, information, or thoughts to become a text that describes a particular person, place, or thing. It explains about a person, place, or thing which can make the readers imagine what is described clearly. Descriptive text is a text that aims to describe a person, thing, or place that is purposed to inform or persuade the reader.

**Teaching Writing Descriptive Text**

Writing is defined by Harmer (2004) as a process and the influence of genre force. It is a form of thinking, but thinking of a particular audience and occasion (Harmer, 2004). Regarding the importance of writing, Stevenson (2009) suggests that, in teaching writing descriptive text, students should be provided with activities such as showing because it will help them to have a vivid imagination. For instance describing people, animals, places, or surroundings, teachers should teach the students by asking them to pay attention to the world around them and to think about what they see, hear, smell, touch, and taste (Stevenson, 2009). The students also should be taught how language works and how to create vivid descriptions. It can be achieved if the teachers teach adjectives and other descriptive tools for writing (Stevenson, 2009). To give a vivid description, the teacher should focus on teaching adjectives, adverbs, and strong action words that will help to describe something.

**Steps in Teaching Writing Descriptive**

The steps of using Word Wall by Jackson (2013) will be described as follows:

**Step 1: Discuss and state words for word wall media with students.**

Arrange the words in alphabetical order or classify them or categories on a wall designated the “word wall.” For a multilingual classroom, add translations and illustrations to the words to support understanding. In the implementation, the students will be asked to create their word wall. In creating this media, the researcher determines the keywords related to the theme and writes a script in a large letter on a paper, so it possible can be seen clearly by all students in the class. The words could be noun, adjective, verb, adverb, or brief sentence which is related to material that will be studied.
The word wall would be categorized into several groups to make it easy for students to find a word that they need or to put in mind. For example, the words “finger, nail, palm, wrist, arm, and elbow” could be categorized into a hand group. The researcher also will focus on the adjectives forms and provide the words with the picture as the illustration to support students’ understanding. For example, the words “triangle, square, circle, and pentagon” will be completed with a picture of those shapes. The words should be printed in a bigger font so they are more visible for all students around word wall areas. In the brainstorming activity, students will be asked to mention some words and memorize them step by step until permanently in mind. They will be able to write text using the words of word wall any time, anywhere by an appropriate way.

**Step 2: Point to the word wall which has been discussed in class**

Point out the possibilities of the word wall using by the students and allow them to make sentences with new words on the word wall. In the word wall activity, the students should choose some words to arrange the sentence. For example, students chose 8 words from the word wall to describe two or three people in the classroom. Another example is finding the words that are consistent in the word wall from the puzzle. From puzzle activity, students can take words from the word wall and memorize new words from the word wall. The student should focus on words that related to their needs and condition. For example, for the beginner, students just need to memorize 4 words a week and make 10 sentences for each new word.

**Step 3: Review Words**

A variety of using new words is key to understanding the nuances of a word’s meaning. Review words and continually use them in new and varied contexts. The review activity in this research is the writing activity. The students will be asked to write sentences describing someone and paragraphs of descriptive text at the end of the teaching program.
III. Research Methodology

This research was held in SMA Nahdatul Ulama, which is located on Gaperta Ujung Street, Medan. Based on some considerations, this school is appropriate for conducting research. A preliminary observation was done to get information about the tenth-grade students in the first semester in academic years 2020/2021. Based on the observation, it was found that the number of tenth-grade students of SMA Nahdatul Ulama, consists of 40 students.

This research was designed in a descriptive qualitative method. This method is effective to be applied in a certain condition which the researcher observes the students’ achievement on writing ability after word wall method was applied. There is Pre-Test and Post Test evaluation for students.

In this type of design, the score of Pre-Test and the Post-test result would be analyzed in the data analysis. Moreover, the score used in the normality and homogeneity test of variance was the score of students from the previous test before the treatment namely summative score. The summative test was already conducted by the English teacher of the experimental and control group to find out the groups’ scores. After conducting the treatment, the post-test was conducted on students and the result was measured to find out whether or not there was a significant effect by implementing Word Wall Media on the writing ability of tenth-grade students in SMA Nahdatul Ulama, Medan.

Instrument of Data Collection

The data of this study was collected by using a writing test. The test was a written test. The researcher tested the writing capability of students by asking students to describe a given topic or title in a limited time. The assessors were the researcher and the teacher. Observation is a data collection technique by observing each ongoing event and recording it with an observation tool about things that will be observed or examined (Sanjaya, 2009). Data collection through observation is carried out by researchers and teachers on the subject of research to get a direct picture of student learning activities in class.

Documentation is an instrument to collect data about events or past events that have been documented (Mulyasa, 2009). Documentation is carried out to obtain or know something with books or archives relating to the study. The documentation was used to obtain data from
the Nahdatul Ulama Students of English Lesson. After the word wall method was implemented, the students were asked to write or describe some topic related to the words in the wall.

**Research Procedures**

The research design of this study was Classroom Action Research (CAR) which consisted of some cycles and some sessions. Every cycle consisted of some stages like planning, action, observation dan feedback.

**Pre-Test**

The pre-test was given to all students. The purpose of the pre-test is to determine the homogeneity in the mean score of students. In doing the pre-test, the students will be asked to write or describe some topic or title and then students’ scores were calculated to meet the criteria of assessment.

This test is intended to measure the students' writing ability. The steps of the pre-test are as follows:

1. Ask students to prepare material for writing
2. Order students to write or describe a given topic,
3. Observing students as they write
4. Evaluate student results.

The result of the pre-test was used to measure the prior knowledge and the problems of the students as well as the basics to make the next test and also the researcher tried to solve those problems. procedures started by giving pre-tests to the students. The score of the students in the pre-test is a measurement of their writing competence. The pre-test was applied before giving treatment.

**Treatment**

Before starting applying the word wall method, the researcher prepared detailed steps as follows:

1. Discussing with teachers about the words wall.
2. Get information from students about difficulties and problems in writing
3. Determining words and simple sentences for learning
4. Preparing pre-tests, evaluation pre-test results, and scoring.
5. Designing appropriate media for word wall display.
6. Do a post-test to measure student ability in writing,
7. Evaluate post-test results and scoring
8. Make a conclusion of word wall effect for enhancing students writing ability

Researchers focus on how to word wall could give effect to students’ writing ability during the stated period. It works properly if the media, display, and word wall are sync together. The point is how word wall make the students' minds were taught when they saw them every hour at least. The effective word wall will make students learn by seeing or looking. The words will be drowned in the subconscious area of the mind.

The most important part is the evaluation of the process by giving questionnaires. It would be great input for the researcher to add, reduce or change the words on the media to synchronize the words’ available and students’ mind acceptance.

**Post-Test**

In classroom action research, researchers act as a classroom teacher and also as an observer. Observation aims to determine whether there is a positive response to the implementation of the word wall. Making observations is crucial, the researcher will know about what is happening in class. In reflection, researchers analyze the result through observations and post-tests.

Observations in each session and post-test in each cycle are used as input to improve subsequent actions in the next session. From reflection, the researcher can make a decision whether the action will be continued or stopped. To collect data needed for this research, research instruments must be built.

The instrument has an important role for researchers in the process of getting data. In collecting data, there are two instruments used by researchers, such as tests and questionnaires. The data intended in this study were collected using initial reflections (pretest), reflection (post-test), and questionnaires. Student scores that can be collected by students in the first pre-
test and post-test until the last post-test show the data. The pre-test is obtained from questionnaires and evaluation of writing sheets by researchers in the cycle and post-test forms are taken from questionnaires given to students at the end of the last cycle.

Researchers get several types of data when making observations to get research results. The first is collected from pre-test and post-test. The second was taken from the questionnaire. Both types of data were collected to make completed scores after conducting research. In this process, the average score indicates the level of student writing achievement after following the teaching and learning process through the word wall method, applied by the researcher. To find out the score of student participation, student skills, and their ability in speaking skills, the researchers analyzed descriptively using the average score formula and the formula for indicators of success.

**Data Analysis Technique**

Data analysis is one way to solve research problems. Using data analysis can answer and test hypotheses (Nazir, 2003). Data analysis techniques in this study use a comparison of the mean in cycle 1 and cycle 2. If the “mean “ figure in cycle one is bigger than cycle two (Cycle 1 > Cycle 2), it means the word wall method is not effective in improving students’ writing abilities. On the contrary, if the “mean” of the figure in cycle 1 was smaller than cycle 2 (cycle 1 < cycle 2), it means the word wall method is effective in escalating students’ writing abilities.

The researcher found the mean of Pre-Test was 38, Post-Test Cycle-1 was 57 and Cycle 2 was 82. It showed that the word wall method influenced the improvement of students’ writing ability significantly.

**IV. FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

Finding

Based on data analysis, the purpose of this study was to improve the writing ability of tenth-grader students of the English Lesson at Nahdatul Ulama School. Data is collected by managing valid and reliable research instruments consisting of pre-test, post-test, and
questionnaire. Post-tests and questionnaires were given during cycle 1, and cycle 2 to get factual results on writing ability through the word wall method.

Researcher conduct teaching and learning processes based on plans written in lesson plans. The researcher asks students to practice writing and then provides a post-test to find out the improvement in students' writing ability, cycle 2 is performed based on the result of 1. In cycle 2, four steps are carried out the same as the steps in Cycle 1. In planning, researchers prepare topics for students to write in English. In evaluation and observation, the word wall method is applied to the teaching process.

Finally, in reflection, the researcher gave a post-test in the last session of Cycle 1. These steps are repeated in eight weeks where the time of each session is 4 weeks. After the process. It can be stated that the research problem from this study is answered. The purpose of this study is used to improve students' writing ability through the word wall method.

V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

After researching at Nahdatul Ulama School, the researcher could confirm significant improvement in students' writing ability. The main data needed for classroom action research is collected through the provision of pre-test and post-test for the subjects studied. Supporting data is obtained by giving a questionnaire at the end of the cycle. The average number of pre-tests carried out in the initial reflection clearly shows that the writing skills of students learned are very low.

The average score set for each cycle was much higher than the pre-test average. The findings of this study conclusively reveal that the word wall method could be used to improve students' writing ability. In addition, the results of the analysis of the percentage of questionnaire scores clearly showed a significant improvement in student learning using the word wall method. Therefore, this finding clearly shows there are improving writing ability through the word wall method is very effective. Therefore, the findings of this study are valid and reliable for students in the English lesson of Nahdatul Ulama school.
Suggestion

After doing this research, the researcher finds some suggestions, they are:

1. The English teacher can apply the word wall method in other grades to improve students’ writing ability.
2. Both teacher and students should be ready and have acceptance willingness to the process of teaching and learning by using the word wall method.
3. This word wall method could be applied in other lessons like math, physics, and chemical which need huge memorization of material.

REFERENCES


