IMPLEMENTING WORD WALL STRATEGY IN TEACHING WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Ratu Sartika  
Department of English Education, Indonesia University of Education  
ratusartikas@yahoo.com  

First Received: 18 May 2017  
Accepted: 7 June 2017  
Final Proof Received: 13 October 2017  
Published: 30 October 2017

Abstract
The research was aimed at investigating the use of Word Wall Strategy in helping junior high school students learn writing descriptive texts and students' opinions toward the implementation of Word Wall Strategy in teaching writing descriptive text. The descriptive qualitative method was employed in this study. The data were obtained through observation, questionnaire, and document as the instruments of the research. The use of Word Wall as the strategy in teaching writing a descriptive text was helpful for junior high school students by facilitating teacher and students to carry out all of the steps in implementing Word Wall Strategy proposed by expert. The result also displayed that Word Wall Strategy have important roles in helping students learn to write a descriptive text with more than 50% responses were positive regarding the students' responses to the use of Word Wall. In the end, based on the result of the study, delivering Word Wall strategy is recommended to be implemented in junior high school's classroom.

Keywords: Word Wall; teaching writing; learning writing; descriptive

INTRODUCTION
In this 21st century world, English will still play vital roles and gained more prestige in education (Suherdi, 2017). He further said that using English in the 21st century means building skills for communication and collaboration as well. In addition, in this 21st, teachers should work on students' critical thinking and problem solving skills and encourage them to be life-long learners. Furthermore, the illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn Toffler (2014).

Indonesian students in 21st century world are expected to be proficient in English both in spoken and written forms. In purpose to achieve students' English proficiency, English must be taught as a compulsory subject at school in Indonesia, especially in the Junior High School. However, such a fact does not guarantee that the students have mastered English well, because Indonesian students prefer their first language in daily activities because of the lack of vocabulary mastery. Even though students know the importance of vocabulary, they still learn vocabulary passively due to several factors, for instance most English teachers still use traditional method in teaching English (Ahmad, 2011). For example, most of English teachers still use memorizing strategy in learning vocabulary by using dictionary as a basic step in learning English. The use of that method makes the lesson runs in a very monotonous situation and most students will be lacked of interest and motivation in learning English as an official subject.

Furthermore, students’ vocabulary mastery influences the students' understanding to achieve learning proposes in their various subjects. They are required to perform complex tasks using new vocabulary especially in writing activity. Moreover in writing activity context, students mostly face a problem finding ideas to write and do not know what to do if they want to start writing because they have a problem in build the vocabularies into written text. In accordance to that problem, teachers have to find other strategy in teaching writing that provide a fun and enjoyable situation. It is agreed that if students are learning in a fun and enjoyable situation, it will be easier for them to
understand and absorb the material, especially for young learners. For the reason above, variation in teaching writing is needed. The teachers should find a strategy or effective media to encourage students’ interest and to build their self-confidence in writing, especially in writing a descriptive text. One of the strategies that offers a fun and enjoyable in teaching writing a descriptive text is word wall strategy. According to Copper & Kiger (2003), cited in Jasmine, Schiels (2009), word wall is a collection of words that arranged in high-frequency appropriate sight, word wall can be classified into groups or categories, and is located on the wall of a classroom for students to easily see and learn. Regarding those situations, the researcher tries to overcome the problems in teaching writing a descriptive text by applying method namely “Word Wall Strategy”.

Word wall activities may engage students while they learn new vocabularies whether to explain a word or to spell it. This is in line with (Cronsberry, 2004) who said that word wall can help students to build their vocabulary, improve spelling in written work, and explain ideas through oral communication. Additionally, when students use the word wall, they become more conscious of words and definitions. It also helps students become aware of vocabulary in the world around them.

This study will be conducted to describe how the implementation of Word Wall strategies help the Junior High School Students to write Descriptive text in an enjoyable and interesting way. In such an enjoyable and fun situation, students hopefully will learn better because they will be highly motivated to be involved in teaching learning process. For that reason, a study on the implementation of word wall strategy in teaching writing descriptive text for Junior High School students will be conducted to 7th grade students in Junior High School.

Referring to those explanation above, this research aims to investigate the implementation of word wall strategy in teaching writing of Descriptive text for Junior High School students and to find out students’ responses to the use of word wall in teaching writing descriptive text to 7th graders in one of Junior High School in Bandung. This research is expected to help teachers in teaching writing descriptive text process even more easy and effective and also give moderate effect on students’ ability in writing a descriptive text by using word wall strategy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Word Wall
A word wall is a collection of high-frequency sight words that are age appropriate, classified into groups or categories, and is located on the wall of a classroom for children to easily see and learn (Brabham & Villaume, 2001; Copper & Kiger, 2003). Additionally, Green (1993) argues that word wall helps to create a print rich environment for students, and can be a wonderful tool that is designed to promote group learning.

Regarding to the definition above, word wall is a systematically organized collection of words displayed in large letters on a wall or other large display place in the classroom. It is a tool to use, not just display.

Word Wall Strategy
It is not enough to simply have a word wall in the classroom. You have to 'do' the word wall (Cunningham, 2000). Teachers cannot simply put up words somewhere in the classroom and tell students to use them. Doing a word wall means being selective and limiting the words that are essential to the unit of study. Doing a word wall means making the words accessible by putting them where students can see them. Doing a word wall means adding words gradually; Cunningham (2000) suggests adding five words a week. Doing a word wall means students have time to practice and to write with the words. Doing a word wall means using a variety of review activities to provide enough practice so that the words become automatic for the students. Teachers who 'do' word walls report that all students can learn critical words. Word walls strategy also serve to teach word analysis and to build vocabulary from units of study.

Descriptive Text
Based on Curriculum 2013 which is the current educational Curriculum in Indonesia, descriptive text is one of the genre of text that have to be taught in teaching writing for Junior High School students (Depdiknas, Indonesian Educational Department, 2013:70). In this study, the writer will be
focused on descriptive text for the seventh-grade students of Junior High School. According to Emilia (2011), descriptive text is a kind of text that has a purpose to give the information about something or someone. In Descriptive text, writers 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) specify the generic structure of descriptive text into two part which are introduction and description. Introduction is the part of paragraph that introduces the character, while description is the part of paragraph that describes the character.

**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 particular audience and occasion (Harmer, 2004).

Regarding to the importance of writing, Stevenson (2009) suggests that, in teaching writing descriptive text, students should be provided by activity such as showing because it will help them to have a vivid imaginary. For instance describing people, animals, place 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 creating vivid descriptions. It can be achieved if the teachers teach adjectives and other descriptive tools for writing (Stevenson, 2009). In order to give vivid description, teacher should focus on teaching adjectives, adverbs, and strong action words that will help to describe something.

**Steps in Teaching Writing Descriptive Text with Word Wall Strategies**

The steps of using Word Wall by Jackson (2013) will be used in the teaching writing descriptive text activities. The following are steps of the implementation of word wall according to Jackson (2013).

**Step 1: Brainstorm a list of words with the students.**

Arrange the words in alphabetical order or classify them into groups 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 own word wall. In creating this media, the researcher determines the key words related to the theme and write a script in large letter on a paper, so it possible can be seen clearly by all students in the class. The key words can be adjectives, nouns, verb, or adverb which is customized with themes that will be studied. The students asked to create a collection of vocabulary words on a piece of cardboard that relate to the theme of learning.

The word wall will be classified into some categories in order to make the students easy to find a word that they need. For instance, the words “wavy, straight, and curly” will be classified into hair 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 “oval, square, heart” will be provided with the picture of those shapes. The words are also printed in a large font so that they are easily visible from all student seating areas. These words are referred to continually throughout a unit or term by the teacher and students during a variety of activities.

In brainstorm activity, students will be asked to do some words activities to help them memorize the words such as words match, group presentation, and arranging letters into words.

**Step 2: Refer to the word wall whenever a word is discussed in class.**

Point out the possibilities of the word wall to the students and allow them to experiment with new words on the word wall. In word wall activity, the students can choose some words to arrange sentence. For example, students have to choose 10 words from word wall to describe someone. Another example is, students have to find words that are consist in word wall from the puzzle. From puzzle activity, students can brainstorm words from word wall and help them to memorize new words from word wall. The activity can be full lesson or shorter activities that makes students play with this strategy and teaches them the materials indirectly.
SaRTika,
Implementing Word Wall strategy in teaching writing descriptive text for junior high school students

Step 3: Review Words
Multiple exposures to 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 writing activity. The students will be asked to write sentences in describing someone and paragraphs of descriptive text in the end of the teaching program.

There are some tips to support our interactive word walls, (Patricia Antonacci & Catherine M. O'Collaghan, 2012). First, incorporate the Interactive Word Wall strategy as part of the word study instructional routine. It means whenever you teach English, promote the students to always use this strategy when they have any difficulties in words. Second, select the display wall carefully; making sure that it is at eye level and large enough to post the words. Teachers must create the word wall bigger so students can see clearly. Third, decide on how you wish to display the words, such as alphabetically or organized by themes or content areas. There are many kinds of word wall example, there are alphabetically and themes, you can see, that is the example of alphabetical word wall, and that one is the theme word wall. Last, write the words legibly on oak tag or paper, demonstrating appropriate handwriting. The teachers or students write the words in an oak tag or paper in a good handwriting, so other students can understand the handwriting.

Method
This study employed a qualitative approach. This method is applied to discover phenomenon which is seen by participants' point of view (Creswell, 1994). In addition, qualitative research is designed to reveal a target audience's range of behavior and the perceptions that drive it with reference to specific topics or issues (Qualitative Research Association, 2014). They further say that qualitative approach uses in-depth studies of small groups of people to guide and support the construction of hypotheses. The results of qualitative research are descriptive rather than predictive.

In addition, this research used descriptive method. The data from teacher’s journal, questionnaires, students’ writing, and students’ reflective journal were analyzed descriptively to explore their attitudes, behavior, and experience along with the teaching program. This idea is in line with Dawson (2009) who said that descriptive method can be a way to discover participants' attitude, behavior, and experience. This study was not designed to find any significant result in a form of statistical quantification as it should be in quantitative one, but rather to find patterns of data.

Moreover in order to establish trustworthiness, some data collection techniques were employed as a form of methodological triangulation, such teacher’s journal, questionnaires, students' reflective journals, and students’ writing. This allowed the researcher to have a better assessment of the validity from feedback in questionnaires and students' reflective journals and to reduce bias or limitation of one particular technique. Considering the reason above, descriptive qualitative was suitable to be applied in this study.

Findings and Discussion
This part elaborates the findings and discussion regarding the observation of the implementation of Word Wall strategy in helping students' ability in writing descriptive text. The data were obtained from the self-observation sheet and students' reflective journal. This study used self-observation sheet as a guidelines for teaching that consist of steps of Word Wall strategy by Jackson (2013).

Brainstorming Step of the Word Wall Strategy
The first step of implementing Word Wall strategy in teaching writing descriptive text was brainstorming. In the implementation, the students did some brainstorm activities by creating their own word wall, presenting new words, and drawing words activities.

The first thing done in brainstorming activity was creating word wall. The students were asked to create Word Wall in the beginning of learning activity in each meeting. In the first meeting, the students were asked to match the words with the picture. While in the second meeting, the students were asked to make their own Word Wall in different way. In the second meeting,
the teacher made a variety in the process of making Word Wall to make them more challenged. The students were given some random letters and pictures. Students had to arrange the letters into a word then match it with the picture. For example, from the letters “L-E-F-S-I-H-S” students arranged the letters into “SELFISH” then they had to match that word to the right picture that was provided by the teacher.

Through creating word wall activity, it was found that students were able to comprehend new adjectives words that will be used in writing descriptive. This kind of activity helped the students to comprehend and define the meaning of words which will be used to build the sentences in writing Descriptive text. Introducing vocabulary of adjective is very essential in writing descriptive text, because most of students knew how to describe something, but they found difficulties in writing the description in English.

After the students created the Word Wall, they conducted a group presentation to explain the words they had by mentioning the words and their meaning. During the presentation activity, it can be seen that the students were able to mention the words and their meaning in Indonesian language correctly. It can be seen that the students understood the meaning of words in Word Wall by explaining the meaning of each words correctly. The presentation activity aimed to make sure that the students understood the words in word wall. Below is the transcription of presentation activity.

**Excerpt 1. Classroom Observation**

**Presentation in Brainstorming Activity**


From the excerpt above, the students presented the words correctly. The students explained the Word Wall by telling the words, pointing the pictures, and telling meaning in Indonesian language. They explained it to other group alternately, so all group had chance to explained their Word Wall. This kind of activity helped students to develop and memorize new vocabularies they got.

After all students conducted presentation, they stick the Word Wall to the whiteboard in front of the class. Before they stick the Word Wall, students had to do a words grouping activities, they had to choose the right title that have been provide by the teacher in the board. The students had to stick the Word Wall under the right title in the board. The words grouping activity is in line with Copper & Kiger (2003), who stated that word wall can be classified into groups or categories. The researcher also choose boards to put the Word Wall because it was very accessible where every student can see them.

Through brainstorming activities, students were introduced some new adjectives words that will be used in writing descriptive words. The introduction of new words in brainstorming activities helped students to get keywords to develop their ideas easily. Moreover, because the students created the word walls themselves, they took ownership of Word Wall and valued them by seeing it and using it in every learning activities.

**Refer to the Word Wall Step**

In the implementation of this step, students conducted several activities such as drawing words activity and words puzzle. In drawing words activity, the students were asked to choose at least 10 words from Word Wall, then they had to draw it in the piece of paper.

Through drawing words activity, students were able to experiment new words by drawing the words in the word wall into picture. Hence, the students were able to get the vivid imagery of words. This activity helped the students to get vivid imagery of new words. So, they were not only know the meaning of word, but they also knew how it looks like. The students done this activity by looking to the word wall in the boards, they were allowed to choose some words before in word wall before they draw it into picture.

In the second meeting, the teacher gave students some word activities such as crosswords puzzle and matching words. Crossword puzzles is a way for students to experiment the vocabulary they have already learned in brainstorming activities. Crossword puzzles can also be useful for students as they try to retain new words in a different language.
Through this activity, the students were able to explore past experiences in vocabularies, and recall recently learned information. Besides, the students were able to define the words correctly by matching the words to the right description. This activity was done by the help of the word wall. The students were allowed to see the words in word wall to help them find the word in puzzle and to think the right description for the words. Hence, the students looked at the word wall frequently in doing these activities.

As the result, this step helped students in comprehending the meaning from the new words they got in brainstorming activities. This step helped students to have vivid description about something, because in teaching writing descriptive text, the students should be taught how language works and how creating vivid descriptions. It can be achieved if the teachers teach adjectives and other descriptive tools for writing (Stevenson, 2009). In order to give vivid description, teacher focused on teaching adjectives that will help students in describing something by giving drawing words activity and matching the words with the right descriptions.

Use Words in Context Steps

The researcher has been analyzed the descriptive text that written by the students. The students’ texts were analyzed in terms of structure, choice of words, and grammar based on the Descriptive text scoring rubric by Brown (2007). In analyzing the students’ Descriptive texts, there were three texts that were analyzed, they were texts from a high achiever, a middle achiever, and a low achiever. The categorization of high, middle, and low achievers were based on students’ English score in previous semester.

First, I would like to explain the analysis of student’s writing from high achiever which can be categorized as excellent writing because of several reasons. First, the content of their writing was clear and understandable enough with the varied choice of words. Besides, it had focus on specific participant and relevant to the topic of descriptive text that showed the social function of descriptive text. Second, she could describe it in detail. The organization also deal with the generic structure of descriptive text. In writing descriptive text, the composition produced should consist of thesis statement, arguments, and recommendation. It could be seen that the student could write with the fluent expressions which clearly stated the main ideas they had. It also could be seen that the student wrote in a logical sequencing with means they already develop a complete part of descriptive that identification and description. Third, the use of tenses were mostly correct which the use of simple present tense plays an important role in writing a descriptive text. Forth, the use of word were very varied.

Second, I would like to explain the analysis of student’s writing from a middle and a lower achiever. Both of them got good scoring criteria, the middle achiever got 12 and the lower achiever got 11 as total score.

These were kind of students writing composition with good criteria. Their writings can be categorized as good writing because of several reasons. First, for the middle achiever, the content of their writing was understandable enough with the varied choice of words. Furthermore, it had focus on specific participant and relevant to the topic of descriptive text that showed the social function of descriptive text. Second, the student could describe it in detail. Third, the use of tenses were mostly correct which the use of simple present tense plays an important role in writing a descriptive text. However, the middle achiever had problem in arranging the sentence into a good paragraph because the structure was not arrange in the right composition. He wrote about physical appearance, then he wrote about behavioral characteristic, but he wrote about the physical appearance again. It also could be seen that the student wrote not in a logical sequencing.

The lower achiever also got good scoring criteria. Their writings can be categorized as good writing because of several reasons. First, it could be seen that the student could write with the fluent expressions which clearly stated the main ideas they had. Second, the student was able to use the language aspect in the right order. There were few mistakes found in the students’ compositions. There were the grammar mistakes, and less variety of word choices.

The observations in the implementation of Word Wall to teach writing descriptive text were done in two times. From the first observation in first implementation, the researcher saw that there were some students got problems in producing sentences. This
was caused by their little experiences of writing. Students should often practice writing in order to make them used to create sentences become paragraph. According to Reid (1993: 98), teacher should allow students sample opportunities to write, not just talk about how to write. The teacher should allow the students to practice writing as much as possible. It was used to train them in producing composition.

Practically, students were rarely given enough opportunity to practice making sentences in classroom. The students' vocabulary which was limited and the low mastery of grammar led them feel jittery in making composition. However, the researcher concluded that Word Wall could increase student's descriptive writing ability. The researcher stated like that because she saw that students were very enthusiastic in writing when they were asked to make a composition based on Word Wall and work sheets that they had. Therefore, they could enjoy writing descriptive text easily by seeing the Word Wall to stimulate ideas in writing descriptive text.

Derived from what has been explained above, it can be said that Word Wall can be used to teach writing descriptive text. Teaching descriptive text using Word Wall strategy was success. It could be seen from students were able to write descriptive text easily by the help of Word Wall, because teaching writing by using Word Wall made students easily to absorb their new knowledge and they could write their idea based on the Word Wall then produce good descriptive text. Word Wall can help the students to look for the ideas in writing the descriptive text. So, they could use new vocabularies creatively. Word Wall could help the students in mastery the material related to the descriptive text genre.

**Students' Responses towards the Use of Word Wall Strategy**

The result displayed that more than 50% responses were positive regarding the students’ responses to the use of Word Wall, which was the media for learning in teaching writing descriptive texts. The use of Word Wall can be used as a media in which the students can improve their vocabulary mastery in English language during the writing activity. The use of Word Wall strategy gave key words for students to develop their ideas easily. The key word triggers the students to arrange another word which was relevant to the key word based on their own words, then they built sentences to create a good text from those key words and their own words. Most of the students also agreed that Word Wall strategy had encouraged them to be more interested in learning English, especially in writing the descriptive text. Most of the students stated in the questionnaire that Word Wall helped them to comprehend the vocabularies and write descriptive text.

**CONCLUSION**

The result of the research revealed that Word Wall strategies helps the students to write descriptive text. The use of Word Wall was observed during the lesson for two meetings. The result also displayed that more than 50% responses were positive regarding the students' responses to the use of Word Wall, which was the media for learning in teaching writing descriptive texts.

Therefore the English teacher should be able to design the teaching learning process as interesting as possible. It aims to make students enjoy, enthusiast, and more interesting in joining teaching learning process. The English teacher should design the students’ activities that are not only interesting but also appropriate with the subject and the students’ needs. The teacher can apply word wall as a media of teaching learning process because it can help the students easier in learning vocabulary to give key words for students to develop their ideas in writing activity.

**REFERENCES**


Cooper, D., & Kiger, N. (2003). *Instructional Strategies to Use Before, During & After Reading {12 Days of Literacy}*. Retrieved from:


Kimberly, Tyson. (2014). *Alphaboxes: 14 Strategies to Use Before, During & After Reading {12 Days of Literacy}*. Retrieved from:


Qualitative Research Consultants Association. (2014). Retrieved from:


Sekwael. (2014). *Improving students’ vocabulary mastery by using word walls strategy alphaboxes strategy to understand descriptive text for the seventh graders of JHS in Ambon.* Article.


