

## Using Magic Cards to Improve students' writing ability for Descriptive Text in English Class

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### Abstract

The aim of the research was to find out how far the improvements of tenth grade students' skills were in writing descriptive text as a result of the use of magic card media. The research was conducted in tenth grade at SMKN 4 Bengkulu city in the second semester of the Academic Year 2016- 2017. This research was also conducted to find out the students' improvement levels of knowledge and learning attitudes during the learning period. The method used in the research was Classroom Action Research with technique of cycles, consisting of cycle I and cycle II. The data collection tool used for quantitative data was in the form of written daily test and the tools for qualitative data were observation, self-reflection, and peer-review sheets as well as performance appraisal rubrics. The research results showed that magic card media could improve the skills in writing descriptive text.

Keywords: Descriptive text, magic card, writing.

### Introduction

English is one of the subjects learned by students in school. It has four language skills we need to master for knowing English better; listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. To write well people need to have good capabilities in writing yet writing is more difficult than speaking., it is in line with Richards and Renandya (2002: 303) statement where he totally believes that writing is the most difficult skill for L2 learners; not only in generating and organizing ideas, but also in translating these ideas into readable text; people who want to write the essay or stories have to know the steps in writing process and aspect of writing,

Even though it is difficult, the writing skills need to be mastered because for so many years, people use their literacy –that is being able to read and write – as a desirable skill for the whole populations (Harmer, 2004: 3; Rahmawati, et al. 2019). It means the writer need to organize the ideas, to construct the sentences, as well as arranging their writing into proper paragraph; cohesive and coherent paragraph and these are the reason why writing is a very complex skill. Thus, in writing, the author needs to read a lot to get input (Martina, et al. 2020; Martina, et al. 2020; Dhillon, et al. 2020; Handayani, et al. 2020). Moreover, the teacher often find difficulties in teaching writing as the students also think that writing descriptive text skills in English is very difficult because there are several aspects of language; proper vocabulary, good and correct grammar, choice of words, correct spelling and punctuation that need to be mastered.

The researcher believes that the classical minimum percentage of completeness is not maximal because the teacher has not used interesting learning media. Morgan and Bewen (1982: 3) state that before deciding aids or media in the lesson plan, the teacher need to consider several points;

The aims and the objectives of the lesson, the characteristics of the students, the communication problems which may affect the lesson, and available resources. Using media in teaching and learning process will give some advantages for both teacher and students. Brinton in Mulia's (2001) also says that media helps the teachers to motivate students. It also delivers information as an input which can be understood by the students.

As Harmer (2004: 87) also states that even the most fluent writers in their own language need time to generate ideas and to plan what to write by them, the same goes to students in the researcher's school; difficult in generating their idea to write. In this case implementing the media in learning process is necessary to motivate students during the process of learning. In choosing the best media, teachers have to know the students' need based on the students' characteristics.

Based on the background above background of the problems raised as explained, the researchers conducted a research, the researcher tried to find alternative learning media which was fun in presenting descriptive text material to improve students' writing skills. The learning media chosen for this research was the magic card media; Magic Card is a learning medium made of a sheet of thick paper or thin rectangular cardboard, on the cardboard there is an image that is presented with an attractive and unique appearance which is used to improve students' skill in writing. The Media Magic Card could be designed by the students themselves so that it looks unique, interesting and helps students to come up with ideas.

### **Research Methodology**

This research applied Arikunto model of classroom action research's method where Arikunto (2006: 16) defines that the principle concept of Classroom Action Research consists of four stages; planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. This research was conducted at SMKN 04 Bengkulu city in tenth grade class. This classroom action research was conducted for 3 (three) months; at the beginning of January to the end of March 2016, specifically on Tuesday and Thursday.

The subjects of this research study were 27 tenth grade students SMKN 04 Bengkulu city in the academic year 2016/2017 majoring motorcycle engineering, consisting only male students. There were 2 (two) types of techniques used, namely test and non-test. The test technique used to measure the progress of student learning outcomes was daily tests and product assessment rubric sheets, writing descriptive text. On the other hand, the non-test technique was in the form of observing student learning behavior during the learning process and student self-reflection sheets after each cycle completed.

Data collection tools used in this study were pre-test question sheets before the first cycle about writing descriptive text without using magic cards; rubric assessment sheet which was being used to measure students' skills in writing descriptive text used by teacher researchers to assess

products; Student self-reflection sheets are used to explore what difficulties students need to overcome.

This classroom action research was designed to be carried out in 2 cycles where cycle I had two meetings, cycle II was also carried out in two meetings, with a time allocation 2X45 minutes (90 minutes) for each. Each cycle consisted of four stages mentioned that should be followed, namely planning, implementing / acting, observing and reflecting.

**Table 1: Students who became the subjects of this research**

No	Name
1	Ahmad Repaldo
2	Armando Prasetyo
3	Arya widia ananta
4	Dimas Anggara Putra
5	Doni tia sunansah
6	Edwin
7	Eko Tri Apriadi
8	Honki Carles
9	Juniadi Saputra
10	M.aditya Pratama Putra
11	Muhammad Murni
12	Naufal Defriadi Pratama
13	Noli
14	Pramana Putra
15	Rangga Dwi Saputra
16	Redo Akbar
17	Reko Afrian
18	Rendi Ardiansyah
19	Rezki Arahman
20	Ryan Febriansyah
21	Riski Ilahi
22	Arival Ramadhani
23	Wahyu Saputra
24	Yumarlin Sakina Wibowo
25	Rendi Mardiansyah



26	Rangga Kurnia Marchel
27	David Sambera

### Activity Report:

#### *Cycle I*

##### 1. Planning

The planning stage started from planning the lesson plan and learning scenario cycle I for two meetings with an allocation of time 2X45 minutes per meeting; Preparing descriptive text material that was presented to students, Preparing materials, Preparing magic card media that used by students to help write descriptive text and arranging evaluation questions related to the prepared text as well as preparing assessment instruments.

##### 2. Acting

Descriptive text learning activities were done first so that students got the concept of the descriptive text clearly. The teacher gave students an understanding of the social function, generic structure and language features of the descriptive text. Furthermore, the teacher explained about the magic card media and the use of magic cards that the students would use in an effort to improve writing skills in descriptive text. After that the teacher gave examples of descriptive text and how to write descriptive text, and then the students began to instruct the teacher to write descriptive text in English using magic card media.

##### 3. Observing

Observing the students' behavior who participating in learning activities, monitoring discussion activities or group cooperation in preparing magic card media and observing the understanding of each in the mastery. Observations were made by teacher friends with the same subject using the observation assessment sheet that had been prepared by the previous research teacher. All of data used as a reference to further improve learning in writing descriptive texts in English subjects in the next cycle.

##### 4. Reflecting

Processing data from the results of students' self-reflection sheets, recording their weaknesses to be used as material for drafting the next cycle design until the goals of research was achieved. The results obtained from observations and evaluation results in cycle I were used as the basis for whether it has met the target or it is necessary to refine the strategy for better results in cycle II.

#### *Cycle II*

It was carried based on the reflection result of cycle I and it has the same pattern as the previous stages which conducted.

## Results and Discussion

### Result

The pre-cycle activity was carried out to determine the students' initial conditions before doing the first cycle and the second cycle. The results of the reflection on the research's result of class X SMKN 04 as follow;

**Table 2: Test Results in Pre-test**

No	Score	Number of respondents	Percentage %	Predicate
1.	90-100			Excellent
2.	80-89	5	18	Very good
3.	70-79	12	45	Good
4.	60-69	10	37	Fair
5.	50-59			Poor
TOTAL		<b>27</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**Table 3: The Result of Cycle I**

No	Score	Number of respondents	Percentage %	Predicate
1.	90-100	2	7,4	Excellent
2.	80-89	11	40,74	Very good
3.	70-79	9	33,34	Good
4.	60-69	5	18,52	Fair
5.	50-59			Poor
TOTAL		<b>27</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**Table 4: The Result of Cycle II**

No	Score	Number of respondents	Percentage %	Predicate
1.	90-100	8	2	Excellent
2.	80-89	15		Very good
3.	70-79	4		Good
4.	60-69			Fair

5.	50-59			Poor
TOTAL		27	100%	

### Discussion

From the results of the pre-cycle test above, the percentage of classical learning completeness at first could be considered as lacking; none of the students got excellent in test, therefore the researchers used magic card as media in conducting cycle I. In this cycle the students wrote descriptive text using magic card media. Cycle I was conducted to determine the extent to which students' skills improvement in writing descriptive text using magic card media. After using the magic cards media, there were clear improvements in students' writing where 7,4 % even earned excellent score.

However, the researchers still conducted further cycle after reflecting on the previous result and did some consultation. The cycle II learning scenario had the same flow as the cycle I learning scenario, but in cycle II the research teacher used learning media in the form of magic cards, and the resulted showed great improvement (Table 3) where the highest score was 95 and the students' lowest score was 70. Non-test results obtained from observations in the form of a questionnaire showed the positive sides of this research that students found it very helpful in writing descriptive text using magic card media. The students also felt happier, more enthusiastic, and motivated in writing.

### Conclusion and Suggestion

#### Conclusion

Using magic card as media clearly could improve the students' in tenth grade Class SMKN 04 Bengkulu in 2016/2017 capability in writing as well as bring enthusiasm and motivation of students in writing descriptive, moreover the teachers could also appear more confident because of the situations becoming more fun, excited and motivated.

#### Suggestions

1. Teachers of English subjects can use learning media to improve students' abilities in mastering various skills in the classroom.
2. English teachers need to practice to start carrying out classroom action research as a prerequisite for the professional development of a teacher so that they are able to overcome the problems of learning English in the classroom.
3. The next researcher could conduct the research whether gender is one of factors that could affect the students in learning or improving English skills (as it has been stated the subjects of this research are all male students).



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