

# Writing Descriptive Text to Activate Learners' Language and Cultural Schema

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**Abstract.** This paper aims at describing the implementation and the effect of writing descriptive text which activates students' schemata of language and culture. This paper employed a qualitative research design with a classroom action research approach. This paper took college students of STKIP PGRI Jombang Batch 2018 as research subjects. The data of this research was in the form of data in the implementation and results of writing descriptive text which activates student's language and cultural schemata. This results of this research show that (1) the implementation of descriptive text writing activates college students' language and cultural schemata. (2) The improvement of descriptive text writing among college students is in the aspects of A) content aspect, such as 1) cohesion, 2) accuracy, 3) details, and 4) comprehensiveness, and B) languages aspect, such as 1) vocabulary, 2) word choice, 3) punctuation, 4) spelling, 5) capital letters, 6) syllabification, and 7) preposition.

**Keywords:** *schema, descriptive text writing, language, culture, literacy*

## INTRODUCTION

Language and culture play a role as two essential and vital elements in society. Both elements complement each other and are inseparable. Language and culture are two domains that commonly take into account to understand human cognition [1]. In addition, language and culture, in the context of education, are important for learners' development. In the current perspective, schema, both in terms of language and culture, is important for learners since it enables the further comprehension of learners [2]. To activate language and cultural schema among learners, one possible attempt that is available to be considered is by utilizing descriptive text writing activity combined with oral literature from local culture as primary encouragement.

These days, the learning approach and strategy have shifted into a more advanced design. Thus,

instructional media plays an important role in delivering learning content [3], [4]. One of the instructional media that can be used to deliver learning content effectively is CD or VCD instructional media. Through CD or VCD instructional media, students can learn independently by listening to learning content within the media which is combined with oral literature of local culture. After students listening to the VCD instructional media, they will be able to be encouraged, and it activates their knowledge schema, improve their experience and understanding. Commonly, most of the students consider writing lesson as the most difficult task to complete and achieve. Most of them frequently feel anxiety when it comes to writing tasks and assignments [5], [6]. Most students require a stimulus to activate their schema or thinking experience, particularly when it comes to writing assignment [7], [8]. Furthermore, students were confused when completing a writing assignment since they did not know how to start an idea and were difficult to develop their ideas [9].

To improve students' writing ability, another strategy can also be employed. One of them is by using dioramas instructional media. The dioramas instructional media employed by a teacher is effective to improve the process in composing qualified writing, and it improves students' activity [10]. Another research has also reported that the writing ability of students could be improved by using a fill-in-the-blank technique combined with images [11]. In addition, the students' writing ability could be further encouraged through synectics model, which focuses on the involvement of senses, word choices, and punctuations [12]. A research regarding the improvement of descriptive writing ability has been conducted by one of the authors of this research through semantic mapping strategy [13]. This paper aimed at providing an alternative strategy to improve students' writing ability, particularly in non-English speaking countries.

Several previous research have been reported that to activate students' schema in descriptive text writing assignment, it requires appropriate media, strategies, models, and processes in the form of direct experience which are able to support students

in analogize and explain in detail something of the object concretely. Through the process of descriptive text writing in this research, the writer also collaborates between language and culture to improve the writing ability of the student. An instructional media which are combined with the local culture can help students in stimulating cognitive aspects of writing a descriptive text while doing the writing process. The students will compose a very detailed writing process when they have experience in terms of visual and auditory through VCD instructional media. In addition, the VCD and CD instructional media loaded with oral literature enable students to compose proper writing which has readable and comprehensive content. Through the utilization of VCD and CD instructional media, students will acquire direct experience and obtain information about oral literature. Thus, the students will be able to illustrate what they have been watching in their writing process.

Descriptive text writing allows students to compose a writing piece that focuses on the details of the object observed [14]. Descriptive text writing also allows students to develop their sensitivity since it enables students to use their senses in observing a real object or phenomena, and it is directed to their experience [15]. Furthermore, description constitutes a concrete verbal illustration in the form of human being, object, visual, landscape, and phenomena [12]. Through the visualization presented in the instructional media, students will be able to compose a detailed descriptive text in accordance with the object they observed. In addition, descriptive text writing constitutes a piece of writing that emphasizes natural and detail definition of an object [14].

The word media is derived from the word *medium*. It has a literal meaning as an intermediary. In a particular context, especially in the educational context, media constitutes as an intermediary during learning and teaching process, and it is commonly referred as graphical equipment, photographic, or electronic devices to acquire, process, and re-arrange a visual or verbal. Some opinions said that 1. Learning media is a tool to present messages and stimulate students to learn. 2. Learning media are tools that contain instructional messages to be communicated. 3. Learning media are tools, both in the form of hardware and software, which are used as communication media and aim to increase the effectiveness of the learning process [16].

VCD and CD learning media provide information and oral-literary events that can stimulate students in writing descriptive texts. This media functions as a technology-based information tool that can be used in the learning process. In addition, this media offers a positive impact in the writing ability of students, particularly in terms of its content. Through the utilization of this media, students' language and cultural schema will be

activated thus, it stimulates their cognitive and improve vocabularies acquisition.

Research on capacity building Writing descriptions with Semantic mapping strategies has also been carried out [13]. According to some previous research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that to activate students' schema on language and culture in descriptive text writing, it requires media, strategy, model, and processes in the form of real-life experiences which assist students in making analogy and explaining in detail certain object in a concrete manner to realize language competence.

## **METHOD**

This paper employed a classroom action research approach or commonly called as CAR. The implementation was conducted in two cycles which consists of pre-writing activity, in-writing activity, and post-writing activity. This research steps were (1) formulating problems and planning action research, (2) implementing action research based on planning, (3) observing the implementation, and (4) performing a reflection on the implementation before conducting further action. The data source of this research was obtained from Class A students in STKIP PGRI Jombang batch 2018, and it involved 30 students. The data collection of this research was conducted by employing observation, interviews, and questionnaires distribution. The data of this research were (1) the implementation of description text writing which opens students' cultural and language schemata and (2) the results of the implementation of descriptive text writing which activates students' cultural and language schema.

The success rate was divided into two aspects: the aspect of content which includes 1) cohesion, 2) accuracy, 3) details, and 4) completeness and the aspect of language which includes 1) vocabulary, 2) word choice, 3) punctuation, 4) spelling, 5) capital letters, 6) syllabification, and 7) preposition. BS value criteria was as follows: if 4 descriptors appear, B; if 3 descriptors appear; C; if the descriptor appears 2, K; if the description appears 1. BS = 86-100, B = 76-85, C = 61-75, K = <60.

The action research steps conducted were as follows: The stage of pre-writing: The students listen to the VCD or CD which had characterized local culture with the local culture exists in Jombang. VCD or CD has been prepared by the lecturer. While listening, the students feel happy with the new experience and have new knowledge on the culture, and they can write the description, or they can have the image of local culture.

The stage of in-writing: The students described the local folktales by writing the description based on the content aspect of writing description, namely: detail aspect, cohesiveness, accuracy, and completeness. The language aspects consist of

diction, spelling, syllabification and punctuation. The students developed it based on the schema which they acquired and developed from the story presented through the VCD or CD. The students visualized in detail because they have got income in an auditory and visual way which can help them to sharpen their memory.

The stage of post-writing: The students presented their own writing and criticized their friends' writing based on the writing assessment given by the lecturer. After that, the students corrected the aspect criticized and then presented it on the wall magazine or publish their descriptive writing.

**Table 1.** The Results in Cycle 1

No	Students	Pre-writing		Success level		In-writing		Success level		Post-writing		Success level	
		Aspect		Language	Content	Aspect		Language	Content	Aspect		Language	Content
		Content	Language			Language	Content			Language	Content		
1	Rh	74	79	2 the descriptors appear	3 the descriptors appear	78	82	3 the descriptors appear	3 the descriptors appear	76	78	3 the descriptors appear	3 the descriptors appear
2	Bj	70	75	2 the descriptors appear	2 the descriptors appear	76	77	3 the descriptors appear	3 the descriptors appear	75	77	2 the descriptors appear	3 the descriptors appear
3	Nt	77	78	3 the descriptors appear	3 the descriptors appear	76	78	3 the descriptors appear	3 the descriptors appear	77	79	3 the descriptors appear	3 the descriptors appear
4	Rt	74	76	2 the descriptors appear	3 the descriptors appear	77	79	3 the descriptors appear	3 the descriptors appear	75	76	2 the descriptors appear	3 the descriptors appear
5	Nr	60	62	1 the descriptors appear	2 the descriptors appear	62	65	2 descriptors appear	2 descriptors appear	65	67	2 the descriptors appear	2 the descriptors appear
6	Rm	63	62	2 the descriptors appear	2 the descriptors appear	65	65	2 the descriptors appear	2 the descriptors appear	67	65	2 the descriptors appear	2 the descriptors appear

**Table 2.** The Results in Cycle 2

No	Students	Pre-writing		Success level		In-writing		Success level		Post-writing		Success level	
		Aspect		Content	Language	Aspect		Content	Language	Aspect		Content	Language
		Content	Language			Content	Language			Content	Language		
1	Rh	84	86	3 the descriptors appear	6 the descriptors appear	85	87	3 the descriptors appear	6 the descriptors appear	86	88	4 the descriptors appear	6 the descriptors appear
2	Bj	80	84	3 the descriptors appear	3 the descriptors appear	80	79	3 the descriptors appear	3 the descriptors appear	84	86	3 the descriptors appear	6 the descriptors appear
3	Nt	86	85	4 the descriptors appear	3 the descriptors appear	86	86	4 the descriptors appear	6 the descriptors appear	88	87	4 the descriptors appear	6 the descriptors appear
4	Rt	79	80	3 the descriptors appear	3 the descriptors appear	82	85	3 the descriptors appear	6 the descriptors appear	86	87	4 the descriptors appear	6 the descriptors appear
5	Nr	76	77	3 the descriptors appear	3 the descriptors appear	85	79	4 descriptors appear	3 descriptors appear	86	84	4 the descriptors appear	4 the descriptors appear
6	Rm	78	77	3 the descriptors appear	3 the descriptors appear	84	82	4 the descriptors appear	3 the descriptors appear	87	83	4 the descriptors appear	4 the descriptors appear

## RESULT & DISCUSSION

The results can be seen in Table 1 and Table 2. They indicate that there was an improvement in the aspect of content and language during pre-writing, in-writing, and post-writing activities. The writing composed by the students were quite comprehensive and detailed since the students' schema of language and cultural have been activated through the utilization of VCD and CD instructional media. In the second cycle, the improvement was very significant. The improvement was found in two aspects: the aspect of content which includes 1) cohesion, 2) accuracy, 3) details, and 4) completeness and the aspect of language which includes 1) vocabulary, 2) word choice, 3) punctuation, 4) spelling, 5) capital letters, 6) syllabification, and 7) preposition.

The success rate was divided into two aspects: the aspect of content which includes 1) cohesion, 2) accuracy, 3) details, and 4) completeness and the aspect of language which includes 1) vocabulary, 2) word choice, 3) punctuation, 4) spelling, 5) capital letters, 6) syllabification, and 7) preposition. BS value criteria were as follows: if 4 descriptors appear, B; if 3 descriptors appear, C; if the descriptor appears 2, K; if the description appears 1. BS = 86-100, B = 76-85, C = 61-75, K = <60.

## CONCLUSION

The implementation of descriptive text writing activity could activate students' language and cultural schema in the form of content and language aspects. It could be improved by using learning media exposure through CD, which contains local culture content. By using this instructional media, students can have a better depiction of concrete objects in detailed, comprehensive, and complete manner. As a result, students' schema will be more improved, and they will have good creativity and good experience.

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