

# USING *PLEASE* STRATEGY IN TEACHING WRITING A DESCRIPTIVE TEXT

Mona Liza<sup>1</sup>, Refnaldi<sup>2</sup>

Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris  
FBS Universitas Negeri Padang  
Email: [monali7a@gmail.com](mailto:monali7a@gmail.com)

## Abstrak

Artikel ini membahas tentang salah satu strategi yang dapat digunakan dalam pengajaran menulis teks deskriptif yaitu *PLEASE strategy*. Guru dapat menerapkan strategi ini kepada siswa untuk memperbaiki kemampuan mereka dalam menulis dan mengembangkan ide-ide dalam teks deskriptif. Maksud dari strategi *PLEASE* itu sendiri adalah *Pick*, siswa memilih, topik format dan siapa pembaca tulisannya untuk memulai menulis, *List*, siswa diminta untuk membuat daftar ide-ide dari topik yang akan dibuatnya. *Evaluate*, siswa mengevaluasi apakah ide-ide yang didapatnya sudah tepat. *Activate*, memulai menulis paragraph dengan membuat kalimat topik sebagai dasar teks. *Supply*, siswa diminta untuk membuat kalimat pendukung dari kalimat topik. Yang terakhir *End*, guru mengingatkan siswa untuk menyelesaikan tulisannya dan mengevaluasi hasil kerjanya.

Key word: Strategy, *PLEASE*, Descriptive text, Writing

## A. Introduction

Writing is the skill that is used to express the feeling, ideas and opinions in written form. People also use writing to communicate in their daily activity. In this modern era, most people use writing to communicate by using modern technology, for example, e-mail, short text message in hand phone, and chatting in social media. So that, writing is an important skill in helping people to communicate each other.

Nattinger (1997: 82) defines that writing is a social event that affected by the social roles and used to communicate, the writer doing conversation in writing is the same as the speaker. It can be seen that writing can also speak out the writer mind in writing. Writing can be a tool for the writer to express their feeling and

---

<sup>1</sup> Student of English Language Teaching Program of FBS UNP graduated on March 2013

<sup>2</sup> Advisor, Lecturer in Faculty of Languages and Arts, State University of Padang

idea in written form. In this case, the writer can speak and doing conversation with their writings to the reader.

Oshima and Hogue (2006:3) say that writing is a process not a product, it need study and practice to develop this skill. Writing a text cannot be done instantly, but it needs a process to do that. The writer should do the writing in step by step. There are some steps that should the writer done before start writing, such as get the idea, the topic and the audience. Then the writer can write their writing.

According to Graham et al (2007: 2) writing is important in helping people to communicate with other people especially for some people in distance. They can use some media to deliver some text messages. So, even though people are in distance, they still can communicate each other by using written text. They can send a letter or an e-mail to their families or their friends in distance.

Besides, writing as a tool to communicate and make people happy. Writing also helps people to test and practice their grammar. Pachler (2009: 150) says that writing is traditionally the form used to practice grammatical structures. Writing is very important for the learner to learn a language and check their grammatical by their writing.

Teaching writing is important in teaching language skill because writing helps the students in delivering some messages and also integrating with other skills. Alderson (2002: 5) says that writing is an important part in curriculum in school that should be taught from the earliest year in the school from the basic level. He also adds that the new writer should consider three sources of input to help them get the content in writing, those are the topic, the writer’s scheme, and the last is the source in writing.

In writing, the students should also be able to write a descriptive text, but writing a descriptive text is still hard for the students. The problems that make writing a descriptive text become hard for the students are the students are lack of vocabulary that make them hard to generate their idea. In writing a descriptive text, the students should also generate an idea and get an object to be described. They should also develop that idea become one or more paragraphs that needs many vocabulary. When the students have lack of vocabulary it will make them hard to start writing the first sentence and also make them confuse to develop their idea.

Other problems that make writing a descriptive text become hard to the students are the teacher does not use an interesting strategy in teaching writing. The teacher merely focuses on the theory and spends the time in the class to explain it. It makes the students not interested to the lesson, so that they do other activities that are not related to the lesson. The situation in the classroom becomes noisy and the students do not get a good atmosphere in the classroom.

In making the students active and good in writing, the students should get more exercises. The teacher should not give them same exercises in teaching writing, for example, the teacher asks the students to copy a paragraph or order jumbled sentences become a good paragraph. That exercises will not help the students to find their own idea and write the text independently.

Furthermore, in teaching writing a descriptive text the teacher should teach the students about descriptive text. Gerrot and Wignell (1994: 208) define that

descriptive text is the text that gives information and describes a particular person, place or thing. They also tell about the generic structure of descriptive text, there are two parts in descriptive text: first identification, it is to identify phenomenon to be described. In this part the writer identifies and gives some information about the ideas or the object that will be described. For example: a person, an animal, and a place. Second description, it is about describe part, qualities, characteristics, and the appearances of the object that will be described. For example: in describing a person, the writer should describe the appearances of that person, like the eyes, the hair and their characters, like kind, friendly, and easygoing person.

They add that the grammatical or language features of descriptive text are: 1) Focus on specific participant. 2) Use of attributive and identifying process. 3) Use adjective to explain noun. 4) Use simple present tense, because the text tells about the fact of the object that is described

In teaching writing a descriptive text the teacher should also teach by using the appropriate strategy. One of the strategies that the teacher can use in teaching writing is PLEASE strategy. Akincilar (2010:53) tells that PLEASE strategy is effective for improving the students' ability in writing paragraph. PLEASE is an acronym from six strategies for each letter, those are: P for pick, pick a topic, purpose and audience. L for List, list the ideas about the topic. E for Evaluate, evaluate the list of ideas and plan the best way to organize the ideas. A for Activate, activate the paragraph with a topic sentence. S for Supply, supply the supporting sentences. E for End, end writing and evaluate your work.

PLEASE strategy also effective for improving the students' ability in writing a text and an essay. The teacher can teach the students how to use PLEASE strategy in helping the students to write a text. The teacher can adapt this strategy and use it in writing a text, because basically this strategy is the same with writing process. This strategy guide the students how their start writing and generate their idea.

In applying this strategy to write a text there are some step that should be revise, such as activate the text with an introduction, and supply the supporting detail. So the full step in using PLEASE strategy in writing a text is pick a topic, purpose and audience, list the ideas about the topic, evaluate the list of ideas and plan the best way to organize the ideas, activate the text with an introduction, supply the supporting detail, end your writing and evaluate your work.

In conclusion, PLEASE is a strategy in writing process. PLEASE strategy can help the students to improve the students writing ability especially in writing a paragraph. This strategy is not only can be used in paragraph writing but this strategy can also be used in writing a text and an essay. By using this strategy the students will be helped to start writing and help them to write step by step until they finish writing a descriptive text. They will be lead by the teacher and PLEASE strategy in writing their descriptive text. In PLEASE strategy the students should know who will read their writing and choose the appropriate topic and them start to collect the data information about what they will write and start their writing.

## **B. Discussion**

### **1. Teaching Preparation**

In teaching and learning process, the teacher should consider some preparations before teach the lesson. These preparations can help the teacher in teaching process. The first preparation is the teacher chooses a topic about the descriptive text. The teacher may consider what kind of the material will be used to teach about describing person, places or things. It should be better to choose a topic that is familiar and interesting to the students. For example, in describing place, the teacher chooses the topic about my home, my bedroom, or my classroom.

The teacher should also consider the appropriate strategy in teaching writing. The teacher can use PLEASE strategy in teaching writing to the students. PLEASE strategy is the strategy in writing process those are Pick, List, Evaluate, Activate, Supply and End. This strategy will help the students to write, how to collect the data, how to start the first sentence, put the data or information in their writing, and how to end their writing.

The teacher also has to prepare a lesson plan. Lesson plan helps the teacher to control or manage the teaching and learning process effectively. At this point, the teacher has to state what is expected from the students at the end of the lesson. If the teacher teaches about writing descriptive text, the teacher has to make the students able to identify and comprehend the content of the text, master the tenses, and produce their own writing. Then, the teacher has to consider how many times to spend for each meeting and for each topic.

After that the teacher should prepare the material that will be taught. The teacher can take the material from a book that has been recommended or any resources depending on level knowledge of the students and situation. The teacher should use a strategy and some activities to support the students' understanding. Then, the teacher also has to prepare the exercise or examination to evaluate students' writing.

So, the teacher should prepare many things before start the lesson. The teacher should prepare the topic about the lesson that is going to teach, the topic should be interesting for the students. The teacher should also prepare the appropriate strategy to help the students in starting writing a descriptive text that is PLEASE strategy. Next, the teacher should prepare the lesson plan and the material to teach a descriptive text.

### **2. The Procedure in Using PLEASE Strategy in Teaching Writing**

Teaching writing by using PLEASE strategy can be used for junior high school students at the first grade. Teaching writing and learning process in junior high school is covered by three steps; pre-teaching activities, whilst-teaching activities, and post-teaching activities. The stages are explained as follows:

#### **a. Pre-teaching Activities**

Pre-teaching activities are done at the beginning of the classroom. It is a kind of warming up activities, which is done in order to build the students background knowledge about the topic that they are going to study. In this pre-teaching activity, the students are introduced to the topic or the lesson to be

taught, for examples describing place. The activities will give some new information that stimulate and increase the students' concentration. These activities are also trying to get the students' attention and interest. So, the teacher motivates the students to study and understand what they are going to study.

**b. Whilst-teaching Activity**

Whilst-teaching activities are the activities conducted during teaching process. In this phase, the teacher leads the students to the main activity in the teaching learning process. In this phase of teaching the teacher explain about PLEASE strategy to the students how to use it in writing process. After that the teacher asks the students to start writing descriptive paragraph. The students will be lead to write a descriptive paragraph by PLEASE strategy.

Whilst-teaching activity consists of three stages. They are exploration, elaboration, and confirmation.

a) Exploration

Exploration is the first stage in whilst-teaching activity. The teacher gives some questions to the students to stimulate them about describing places. The examples of the questions are:

- Where is the white board?
- How many students are in the class?
- How many chairs are in this class?
- How many tables are in this class?
- Is the class big or small?
- Is the class clean?
- Is the class comfortable?

In this stage the teacher tells the students what they are going to learn that is describing place. In this phase of teaching, the teacher explains to the students about descriptive text. The teacher can give example of preposition words to help the students in writing descriptive text about describing place, for example; in, on, at, bellow, beside, above, behind, in front of and etc, about size; big, small, medium. Then, the teacher asks the students to look around their classroom because they are going to describe it.

Next, the teacher can discuss with the students about the question that the teacher has been given. The students can use the preposition word to answer the questions. In this phase of teaching, the teacher also explains about PLEASE strategy to the students. After that, the teacher gives the example how to use PLEASE strategy in writing a descriptive text. The steps in teaching writing descriptive are by using PLEASE strategy are:

1) Pick

The teacher asks the students to pick the topic about their writing. The topic should be familiar and interesting. In giving the example, the teacher gives the students some questions about their classroom. So, they can write the topic about classroom or "My classroom" and the audience is the teacher and the students' friends in the classroom.

2) List

The teacher asks the students to list all ideas about their classroom in their group. So, the students can list the ideas as follows:

- the classroom is big
- There are 30 tables and chair in the class
- The picture of the president
- The picture of vice president
- The white board is in front of the classroom
- The teacher’s desk and chair is in front of the class
- The wall paint is white
- The class is comfortable
- The Garuda is on the wall
- The rubbish bin is near the door
- The class is clean

3) Evaluate

After the students collect all of the information about their class, they can evaluate all the ideas, which ideas that will be use and support their topic in describing their classroom. If there is not enough data, they can find more ideas. After that, the students plan the best way to organize their ideas by making a simple outline in a piece of paper. They should think the best way to explore their topic based on the outline and in order to make their audience are interested with their writing.

4) Activate

The teacher asks the students to write their first sentence about their topic. The students can write the first sentence that is “My classroom is big”.

5) Supply

The teacher commands the students to supply the supporting sentences in their paragraph with the ideas that they have collected. The teacher explains how important is the supporting sentences and put it in their writing. The example of supporting sentences for topic “My classroom” is:

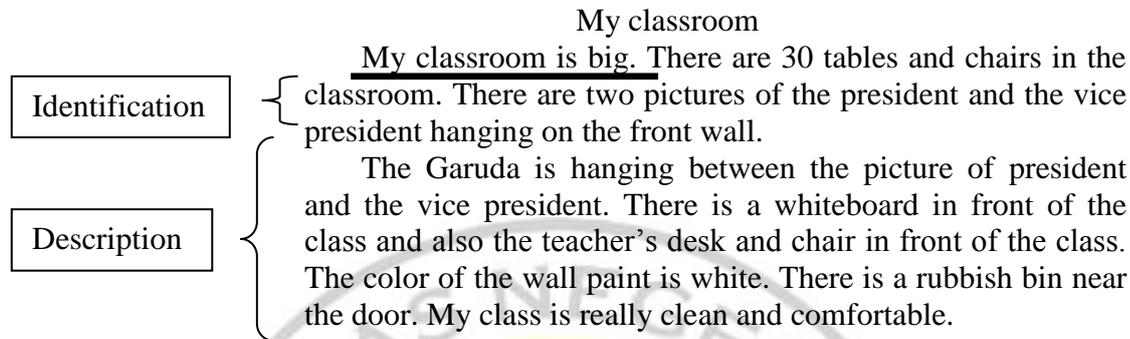
There are 30 tables and chairs in the classroom. There are two pictures of the president and the vice president hanging on the front wall. The Garuda is hanging between the picture of the president and the vice president. There is a whiteboard in front of the class and also the teacher’s desk and chair in front of the class. The color of the wall paint is white. There is a rubbish bin near the door.

6) End

The teacher reminds the students to end and evaluate their writing. The students write their last sentence in describing their classroom, the sentence is “My classroom is really clean and comfortable”. In this last step of writing, the teacher reminds the students to end or finish their writing and evaluate their writing. The teacher asks the students to check and edit their writing.

After the students complete their descriptive text, the teacher explains about the generic structure of descriptive text. The generic structures of

descriptive text are identification and description and the teacher explains it by using the text that they have finished together. So the full paragraph is:



b) Elaboration

The teacher has explained about PLEASE strategy and how to use it in writing a descriptive text. In this stage of whilst-teaching activity, the teacher asks the students to write another descriptive paragraph independently to check the students' ability and comprehension in writing descriptive text. The topic should be interesting and familiar with them. The students will follow the instruction by the teacher based on the PLEASE strategy, Pick the idea, List the information about the idea, Evaluate the information, Activate the first sentence, Supply the supporting sentences, and End the paragraph with concluding sentence.

c) Confirmation

After the students finished their assignment, the teacher asks them to submit their tasks and asks some questions from the students about the lessons that have been learn. Then, the teacher explains again about the descriptive text.

**c. Post-teaching Activities**

Post-teaching activities are the activities that are conducted at the end of the lesson. In this teaching activity, the teacher concludes the lesson about descriptive text. Then at the end of the class the teacher with remands the students about their task or their homework and give them some motivation.

**3. The Advantages of Using PLEASE Strategy**

Teaching writing a descriptive text by using PLEASE strategy has some advantages:

- a. PLEASE strategy can help the students to improve the students writing ability especially in writing a paragraph and also in writing a text.
- b. PLEASE strategy can also help the students how to start their writing. This strategy also help the students to plan what they are going to write from pre writing activity and also help the students to generate their idea while writing and how to revise their writing.
- c. The PLEASE strategy helps the students to write independently. It will help the students to write independently because PLEASE strategy leads

the students to find their own topic and ideas about what they will write. This strategy also leads the students to write from the beginning of their writing until they end it.

### C. Conclusion and Suggestions

In teaching writing, the teacher should be able to attract the students' attention and the teacher also has to be creative. The teacher should choose a strategy that can involve the students to write independently, especially in writing. One of the strategies that the teacher can use in teaching a descriptive text is PLEASE strategy. PLEASE strategy will help the students to organize and generate their ideas easily, especially in writing a descriptive text. This strategy also makes students active and feels motivated in writing. Procedure of teaching writing by using this strategy is divided into three stages. They are pre-teaching activity, whilst-teaching activity, and post-teaching activity.

It is suggested that the English teacher to apply PLEASE strategy in teaching writing. The PLEASE strategy is suitable for the students at Junior High School and can help the students in improving their writing skill. The teacher also should teach the students about writing process to help the students in writing. The teacher can use PLEASE strategy to teach writing process to the students. The PLEASE strategy can also be applied to lead the students in writing an essay because it is the steps in writing process. The teacher can also use the PLEASE strategy to teach other genre of the texts. The PLEASE strategy can be applied in teaching procedure text, narrative text, recount text and other texts in the curriculum.

**Note:** This article was written based on the writer's paper with the advisor Dr. Refnaldi, S.Pd., M.Litt

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Akincilar, Vildan. 2010. *The Effect of “PLEASE” Strategy Training Through The Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) Model on Fifth Grade EFL Students' Descriptive Writing: Strategy Training on Planning*. Midle East Technical University. Retrived From <http://etd.lib.metu.edu.tr/upload/3/12611947/index.pdf> on Friday, 19 October 2012
- Alderson, J. Charles and Lyle F. Bachman. 2002. *Assessing Writing*. New York: Cambridge University Press

Gerot, Linda and Peter Wignell. 1995. *Making sense of Functional Grammar*. Sydney: Antipodean Educational Enterprises

Graham, Steve, Charles A. Mac Arthur and Jill Fitzgerald. 2007. *Best Practice in Writing Instruction*. New York: The Guilford Press

Nattinger, James R and Janette S. de Carrico. 1997. *Lexical Phrases and Language Teaching*. New York: Oxford University Press

Oshima, Alice and Ann Hogue. 2006. *Writing Academic English (4<sup>th</sup> ed)*. New York: Pearson Longman

Pechler, Nobert, Ann Barnies and Kitfield. 2009. *Learning to Teach Modern Foreign Languages in the Secondary School (3<sup>rd</sup> ed)*. United States of America: Routledge

