

THE EFFECT OF THINK TALK WRITE (TTW) STRATEGY ON STUDENTS' ABILITY IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to find out the effect of Think Talk Write (TTW) Strategy on students' ability in writing descriptive text. The research was conducted by using experimental research design. The population was the students of grade X consisting of 60 students. The sample was selected by applying cluster random sampling technique. The sample was divided into two groups namely experimental and control groups. Class X-iis consisting of 30 students was the experimental group taught by using Think Talk Write (TTW) Strategy. Class X-mia consisting of 30 students was the control group taught by conventional strategy. The instrument used to collect the data was writing test. The result of the data analysis by applying t-test formula showed that t-obs value was higher than t-table value ($t\text{-obs} > t\text{-table} = 3.747 > 2.660$). Based on the finding, H_a was accepted and H_o was rejected. Thus, Think Talk Write (TTW) Strategy significantly affected the students' ability in writing descriptive text.

Keywords: descriptive text, Think Talk Write (TTW) strategy, writing

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui efek Strategi Think Talk Write (TTW) terhadap kemampuan menulis deskriptif teks siswa. Penelitian ini dilakukan menggunakan desain penelitian eksperimental. Populasi adalah siswa kelas X yang berjumlah 60 siswa. Sampel dipilih menggunakan teknik sampel kelas acak. Sampel dibagi menjadi dua grup yaitu grup eksperimen dan grup kontrol. Kelas X-iis dengan jumlah siswa 30 merupakan grup eksperimen yang diajar dengan Strategi Think Talk Write (TTW). Kelas X-mia dengan jumlah siswa 30 merupakan grup kontrol yang diajar dengan strategi konvensional. Instrumen pengumpulan data menggunakan tes menulis. Hasil analisis data dengan rumus uji-t menunjukkan nilai t-hitung lebih tinggi daripada nilai t-tabel ($t\text{-hitung} > t\text{-tabel} = 3,747 > 2,660$). Berdasarkan temuan, H_a diterima dan H_o ditolak. Oleh karena itu, strategi Think Talk Write (TTW) secara signifikan mempengaruhi kemampuan menulis deskriptif teks siswa.

Kata kunci : teks deskriptif, strategi Think Talk Write (TTW), menulis

A. Introduction

The conceptual thinking for this research was based on the writing problems faced by the students particularly the writing of descriptive text. They have to study hard in order to write effectively. There are some reasons that make writing becomes so difficult for students. Firstly, writing requires good grammar in its process, while most students do not really like to study grammar. Secondly, people often know to spend less time to write than to listen, to speak, and even to read. Thirdly, most students are not confident in writing because they usually think that their writing is bad.

Lado (1969: 24) states that writing is one of the most important skills in learning language besides listening, reading, and speaking. As one of the basic language skills, writing has a very complex process. Therefore writing is not easy as some people think. Harmer (2004: 86) states that writing is a process and that we write is often heavily influenced by contains of genres, then these element have to be present in learning activities. Brown (2001: 346) says that learning to write is seen as a developmental process that help students to write as professional authors do, choosing their own topics and genre, and writing from their own experiences or observations.

A writing process approach requires that the teachers give students greatly responsibility for, and ownership of their learning. Students make decisions about genre and choice of topics, and collaborate as they write. During the writing process, students engage in pre-writing, planning, drafting, and post-writing activities. Bram (1995:7) states that in principle, to write means to produce or reproduce written messages. Before we write, we need to determine what to write. We should have something meaningful, clear, precise, and unambiguous.

There are 5 competent scales that should be mastered in writing namely content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics as stated by Jacob et. al. (1983: 39). The content concerns with the invention of writing having something to say. The organization of the component addresses disposition or rhetoric principles of arrangement. Vocabulary, language use, and mechanics together deal with elocution of the

linguistics and mechanical principles for effective delivery of discourse.

The fact that writing skill is considered difficult for students, particularly the writing of descriptive text, causes problems for the students. During the teaching of the X grade students in one private high school in Medan, it was found out that most students of this school were not interested in writing subject and they have quite low scores in writing descriptive text. When they wrote this type of text, they wrote everything without focusing on the coherence. They might have some ideas on their mind, but they did not know how to express them in writing. They had trouble in organizing their ideas. Therefore, the students need to be taught using an appropriate strategy to make them easier in understanding how to write good descriptive text, so that they will achieve at least the minimum standard score of passing grade.

Descriptive text is a text which tells what a person or a thing is like. Its purpose is to describe and reveal a particular person, place, or thing (Gerot and Wignell, 1995: 208). It is often completed with pictures, diagrams, maps, etc. It usually uses vocabularies that cover the words such as the name of places including location, destination, function, and performance. For the people, the vocabularies used are the word describing name, ages, address, job, etc. Moreover, the language use is neutral or objective language. According to Kane (2000: 352) description is about sensory experience how something looks, sounds, tastes. Mostly it is about visual experience, but description also deals with other kinds of perception. A descriptive text is structure with general identification and followed by detail description. In identification paragraph, descriptive text will explore to answer the question of who, what, when, and where.

There are also some characteristics of descriptive text such as using the simple present tense, using attribute verb, such as be (am, is, are), and focusing on one such object. Therefore, it can be said that descriptive text is a text which says what a person or a thing is like. Its purpose is to describe and reveal a particular person, place, or thing.

According to Gerot and Wignell (1995: 208) the generic structures of descriptive text are identification which means identifying the phenomenon to be described and description which means describing the phenomenon in

parts, qualities, characteristics. As for the lexical grammatical features of descriptive text refer to focus on specific participants, use of attributive and identifying process, frequent use of epithets and classifiers in nominal group, and use of the simple present tense.

Due to the fact described above, it is need a proper strategy to teach writing descriptive text to the students, in order that they will be able to understand and practice the writing. One strategy proposed to solve this problem is by applying the Think Talk Write (TTW) Strategy. Huinker and Laughlin (1996: 82) state that Think-Talk- Write strategy builds in time for thought and reflection and for the organization and the testing of those ideas before students are expected to write. The flow of communication progresses from student engaging in thought or reflective dialogue with themselves, to talking and sharing ideas with one another, to writing. In TTW, the students are engaged in language learning with the some requirements such as the students should be using the language spontaneously to communicate ideas, feeling, and opinions, should identify informal out-of-class language learning experiences, and should be supervenes to be able to evaluate their progress in terms of increases in their functional proficiency. According to Porter (1992: 179) Think Talk Write (TTW) is learning where students are given the opportunity to students to start learning with understand the problem first, then engage actively in group discussions, and finally write their own language with less learning results obtained. Barras (2006: 8) says that Think-Talk-write (TTW) is a teaching strategy in facilitating the learners to speak and to write fluently.

Theoretically, the writing problem could be solved by applying TTW as the teaching strategy which involves the students in the teaching-learning process. It is a student-centered activity. Thus, TTW is conducted based on the students' social behavior activities. TTW motivates the learners to think, to talk, and then to write. TTW is applied to develop writing skill and to build up language skill before writing. This strategy leads the students to influence and to manipulate ideas before writing. It also helps students to collect and to develop ideas about a certain topic through discussion or conversation.

TTW involves three important stages that must be develop and made in learning

(Huinker and Laughlin, 1996: 81; Masingila and Wisniowska, 1996: 95).

1. Think: thinking and talking are important steps in the process of bringing meaning into student's writing.
2. Talk: classroom opportunities for talk enable students to connect the language they know from their own personal experiences and backgrounds with the language, analyze and synthesize mathematical ideas, fosters collaboration and helps to build a learning community in the classroom. Talking encourages the exploration of words and the testing of ideas. Talking promotes understanding. When students are given numerous opportunities to talk, the meaning that is constructed finds its way into students' writing, and the writing further contributes to the construction of meaning.
3. Write: writing can help students make their tacit knowledge and thoughts more explicit so that they can look at, and reflect on, their knowledge and thoughts.

Activity of writing at this stage includes writing solutions to problems/questions provided, including calculations, organize all the work step by step (well completion, some use charts, graphs, or tables to be easily read able and action able), correcting all the work so sure there are no jobs or miss calculation, and believing that the best job, that is a complete, easy to read and guarantee its authenticity. TTW developed from a case of cooperative approach, so the atmosphere is more effective when done in a heterogeneous group of 3-5 students. In this group, students are asked to read, to make notes, to explain, to listen and share ideas with friends and then to deliver it in writing.

Silver and Smith (1996: 24) arranged the steps of TTW strategy as follows.

1. Teacher distributes reading text to the students and asks them to give comments about the text.
2. Students read the text and make notes of the reading on an individual basis to be brought to discussion forums (think).
3. Students interact and collaborate with friends to discuss the contents of a note (talk).
4. Students create their own knowledge includes and understanding of descriptive text (write).

As teaching strategy, of course this TTW also have some advantages and disadvantages. According to Suseli (2010: 39), the advantages of TTW can educate students more independent, can develop teamwork, train of thought, speech and make notes, give more personal experience, train students dare exchange information among groups/students, can make students become more active. The disadvantages are rather difficult to control the discussion because sometimes the brilliant students are too dominant that the slow students do not get changes to take part in the discussion and rather difficult for teacher to control time for discussion.

This research was conducted to prove the effectiveness of TTW strategy in helping the students to be able to write descriptive text. The concept is that Think Talk Write (TTW) Strategy can facilitate language exercises orally and write the language fluently. This can encourage students to think, speak, and then write effectively. Since TTW is used to develop writing and practice the language fluently before writing, especially writing descriptive text, it allows students to influence and manipulate ideas before writing. This strategy also assists students in gathering and developing ideas through structured conversations. During learning activities, students often encounter problems when they are given written assignments. They always try to directly start writing the answers. Although it is not something wrong, but it would be more meaningful if the first think they do is think, reflect and develop ideas, then test the ideas before starting to write. TTW Strategy is built by providing time for students to perform these activities.

B. Research Method

This research was conducted by using experimental research design with two groups: experimental group which received treatment by using Think Talk Write and control group which received treatment by using conventional strategy. The population was taken from all the students of grade X of with the total number of 60 students which consisted of two parallel classes namely X-mia and X-iis. The cluster random sampling using lottery technique was used in drawing sample. Each class name was written on a piece of paper then it put a box. The class taken for the

first time was the experimental group and the class taken for the second time was the control group. It was that X-iis consisting of 30 students was taken as the experimental group and X-mia consisting of 30 students was taken as control group.

Table 1. Population and Sample

No	Class/Group	Population	Sample
1	X-iis / Experimental	30	30
2	X-mia / Control	30	30
TOTAL		60	60

The instrument of the research used the writing test. The same writing test was administered to experimental group and control group. The students of both groups were asked to write descriptive text with different topics: My Parents, My House, My School, and My Bag.

In giving the score for the students' writing tests, there were some indicators that must be considered. According to Heaton (1988: 146) there are five components that must be paid special attention to score, namely: content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanism.

For collecting the data, the procedure of the research was divided into three sections: pre-test, treatment, and post-test. Pre-test was administered to know each student's ability in writing both in experimental and control groups before receiving the treatment. The students were asked to write descriptive text. In treatment section, experimental group was taught by using Think Talk Write Strategy. The teacher distributed a descriptive text and asked students to give comment about the text. The students read and made notes of the reading on an individual basis to bring to a discussion forum (think). Students interacted and collaborated with friends to discuss the contents of a note (talk). Teacher acted as mediator during learning environment. Students created their own knowledge included an understanding of descriptive writing (write). In control group, he teacher only gave some explanation about writing descriptive text and then asked the students to practice to write with the topics given. The teaching process in

treatment section was conducted in three meetings. Post-test was administered to both experimental and control groups after completing the treatment. The result of post-test in both groups was analyzed to find out if TTW strategy significantly affected students' ability in writing descriptive text.

In order to know the different effect between experimental group and control groups the t-test was applied to analyze the data obtain.

C. Result and Discussion

Before administering the instrument of writing test to the sample of this research, the writing test was tested first for the reliability. The reliability of the writing test instrument was conducted by applying inter rater validity. The formula used was Pearson Product Moment. It resulted that the coefficient correlation was 0.55 which meant that the test was reliable because the coefficient value of reliability of writing test in this research had a high coefficient correlation. Thus, this writing test could be applied as the instrument for this research.

The data of this research were students' score in pre-test and post-test taken from the students' writing descriptive text of experimental group and control group. The highest score of pre-test in experimental group was 77 and the lowest score was 45. The highest score of post-test in the experimental group was 90 and the lowest score was 55. The highest score of pre-test in control group was 64 and the lowest score was 32. In post-test, the highest score in control group was 78 and lowest score was 43. Based on those data, the t-test calculation was conducted to obtain the comparison score between the two groups. The result showed that the value of t-obs (3.747) was higher than t-table (2.660) at significant level of $p = 0.05$. As the result, the hypothesis formulated that the students' ability writing in descriptive text significantly affected taught by applying Think-Talk-Write Strategy was accepted.

To sum up from the result described above, applying Think Talk Write (TTW) Strategy could facilitate students before writing text because this strategy gave direction to the students before starting to write. The phase from "think" after receiving the material, and the phase "talk" when

discussing the material with others, then the phase "write" after having the discussion lead the students to be more aware of writing their ideas. The students could create interaction and collaborative within the group to discuss, create notes, and build their own knowledge in descriptive text. The students also seemed feeling more affected and got more interaction with each other. Thus, in this research as well, applying Think Talk Write (TTW) Strategy in writing descriptive text definitely gave significant effect on students' ability.

D. Conclusion and Suggestion

This research can conclude that Think Talk Write (TTW) Strategy could significantly affect the students' ability in writing descriptive text. This conclusion was supported by the result finding as well as the data analysis. Like others researches conducted previously, this research also proved the hypotheses formulated before conducting the research. The alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted and the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected.

The suggestion for this research is related to the management of the class. Since applying this strategy requires more effort and consumes much time, the teacher needs to arrange those points in order to obtain the real result. Therefore, for other researchers with the same intention need to consider this.

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