

IMPROVING STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT ON WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT THROUGH THINK PAIR SHARE

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ABSTRACT

Students' achievement in writing descriptive text is very low, in this study Think Pair Share (TPS) is applied to solve the problem. Action research is conducted for the result and qualitative and quantitative technique are applied in this research. The subject of this research is grade VIII in Junior High School, Rantau Parapat, North Sumatera, Indonesia. In the first test, the students get the mean of mark 66,4375. It dramatically increases on the second test, which gets 78,125. Additionally, on the third test the mean of students' mark reaches a pick on 87,5625. Observation result showed that the students gave their good attitudes and responses during teaching and learning process by applying the application of TPS (Think Pair Share) method. Questionnaire and interview report showed that students agree that the application of TPS (Think Pair Share) method had helped them in writing descriptive text. It can be conclude that the students' achievement is improved when they are taught by TPS Method.

KEY WORDS: *Achievement, Writing, Descriptive Text and Think Pair Share*

INTRODUCTION

The Background of The Study

English is the language of global terms that need to be developed in Indonesia. Due to the ability to speak English, people have been able to obtain and provide information that was very important to develop oneself and the environment. Therefore, in Indonesian language has been incorporated into the curriculum of English schools and colleges so that English can be taught to the Indonesian people well and in line with expectations stated in the opening of the 1945 constitution that was to increase the nation intellectual life.

In learning the English language, there are four skills that should be taught to students. They are speaking, listening, reading and writing. In practice, learning the lessons taught writing after speaking, listening and reading. But this does not state that learning writing is not important. In fact, writing is a very important skill as writing needs practice and writing is the very difficult subject for the students. It is related to Oshima and Hogue (1999:3) that writing, particularly academic writing is not easy. It takes study and practice to develop this skill. For both native and new learners of English, it is important to note that writing is a process, not a "product".

This means that a piece of writing, whether it is a composition for your English class or a lab report for your chemistry class is never complete; that is, it is always possible to review and revise, and review and revise again.

Writing is a very important capability for being owned by students, writing is also an excellent communication tool. Through writing, each person is able to convey feelings, ideas, and announcements to others. Sharples (1999:8) actually, writing is an opportunity; it allows students to express something about themselves, explore and explain ideas. Student can convey their ideas in their mind by organizing them into a good text so that the others know them and they can think critically. Therefore, learning is very important for improved writing in particular learning of English in Indonesia because the writing is a process of transformation of thoughts and ideas into tangible forms of writing. In addition, many people choose writing as a means of effective and efficient communication of information to be conveyed in some ways like posting letters, business letters and important information in a company's product.

In the *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP) 2006* syllabus of junior and senior high schools curriculum requires students to be able to write some kind of genre in writing. They are narrative, recount, descriptive, report, explanation, analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, procedure, discussion, reviews, anecdote, spoof, and news items.

Based on the above, the descriptive text is one genre that must be mastered by students in learning English. And theoretically, according to Ervina Evawina S (2010:7) descriptive paragraph is a paragraph vividly portrays a person, place, or thing in such a way that the reader can visualize the topic and enter into the writer's experience.

In fact, not all students are able to write descriptive paragraph properly and in accordance with the existing elements in the descriptive text. Based on the researcher's observation at the time of the teaching practice program (PPL) contained 75% of students who were unable to write a descriptive paragraph. Teachers of English already have taught the material to students well but the students still had the problem in writing descriptive paragraph. In addition, the researcher also had looked the teachers of English language teaching by lecture, and then asked the students to write descriptive paragraph individually.

From the above, student's ability to write descriptive paragraph is very less because the learning methods that is adopted by teachers of English language was a method that does not fit anymore in this day because it reduces the interest and liveliness of the students in the learning process so that students are bored and do not want to continue learning as they have to do.

At this present time, there are already implementations Learning Revolution in teaching and learning that is learning is no longer centered on teachers. In other words, it is called "Teacher Centered Learning (TCL)" but it has been centered on students. It is called "Student Centered Learning (SCL)". Theoretically, SCL is an approach to education focusing on the needs of the students, rather than those of others involved in the educational process, such as teacher and administrators (<http://en.wikipedia.org>). So the teacher is only as facilitators and a provider of

solutions in learning is no longer only as a source of knowledge in the learning process.

Based on the above, the researcher offers a method that have to be applied in the learning process of writing descriptive paragraph because Ransdell and Laure Barbier (2002: 143) maintain that a good writing strategy can be trained, and it can improve writing performance. The method that is offered by researcher is the implementation of Student Centered Learning (SCL) and the development of Cooperative Learning (CL) that according to Slavin (1995:2) Cooperative Learning refers to variety of teaching methods in which students work in small group to help one another learn academic content. In cooperative classrooms, students are expected to help each other to discuss and argue with each other, to assess each other's current knowledge and fill in gaps in each other's understanding, so that the interest and active students in the learning process can be improved not only individually but in groups or together. Learning method, which the researcher refers to, is Think Pair Share (TPS).

Think Pair Share (TPS) is one of the Cooperative Learning methods which poses a challenging or open-ended question and gives students a half to one minute to think about the question. Students then pair with a collaborative group member or neighbor sitting nearby and discuss their ideas about the question for several minutes. The think-pair-share structure gives all students the opportunity to discuss their ideas (www.wcer.wvasc.edu). It is designed to motivate the students to tackle and success at problem, which initially are beyond their ability. It is based on the simple nation of mediated learning. Obviously, one alternative to solve the problem of writing descriptive paragraph is by applying TPS.

With the application of this method is expected to enhance students' skills in writing descriptive paragraph properly and in accordance with the existing elements in the descriptive paragraph.

THE PROBLEM OF THE STUDY

Based on the background of the study, the problem of this study was formulated as follows:

“How do apply Think Pair Share method to improve the students' achievement in writing descriptive Text?”

THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

In relation to the problem, the objective of the study was to investigate and to find out the improvement of students achievement in writing descriptive text through the application of Think Pair Share (TPS) method.

THE SIGNIFICANT OF THE STUDY

Finding of this study are expected to:

1. to motivate the students to be better on writing descriptive paragraph,

2. to provide significant information for the English teacher in their attempt to decide the TPS in teaching descriptive writing in senior high school,
3. to increase the readers knowledge about TPS and descriptive paragraph and,
4. to help the next researcher candidate of the teacher to apply a model in teaching learning process.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Achievement

Travers (1970:447) states that achievement is the result of what an individual has learned from some education experience. Additionally, Yelon, Weinstein, and Weener (1977:301) express achievement as the successfulness of individual, while another source Smith and Hudgins (1964:95) says that achievement is to do one's best, to be successful to accomplish tasks requiring skill and effort and to be recognized by authority.

Based on the opinions above, it can be concluded that achievement is the result, the successfulness, the extent or ability, the progress in learning education experiences that the individual indicates relation with his/her educational learning. Achievement concerns with what someone has actually learnt whereas aptitude is the potential for learning something. In other words, achievement is a success in reaching particular goal/status or standard, especially by effort, skill, courage, and so on.

Writing

Writing is a process of formulating and organizing ideas in right words to deliver the aim and present them on a piece of paper. According to Jones in R. Cooper and Odell (1977:33) writing is synonymous with discourse, and discourse is discussed in terms of its aims, it relate to the function of language, and in terms of its feature, which are the separate elements, devices, and mechanism of language.

On the other hand, Reinking, Hard and Osten (1993:188) state that writing is a way of communication and of course communicates all the time. And then Deporter and Heracki (2002:179) explain that writing is a whole brain activity, which uses bright brain side (emotion) and left-brain side (logic). Although right and left-brain sides are used in writing, right brain side has a big position because it is a place, which appears new ideas and emotion.

From the explanation above, we can state that writing is a whole brain activity to formulate and to organize ideas in right words to deliver and communicate the aims to the reader and present it on a piece of paper.

Descriptive Text

A descriptive text is a piece of writing that is intended to convey meaning to the reader through sensory details and provides image to the reader (<http://www.ehow.com>). Additionally, descriptive text is a paragraph that is defined as a group of sentences that are closely related in thought and which serve one comment purpose often used to describe what a person looks like

and acts like, what a place looks like, and what an object looks like (<http://www.examples-help.org.uk>). Furthermore, Pardiyono (2007:34) state that description paragraph is a type of written text paragraph, in which has the specific function to describe about an object (living or non-living things) and it has the aim that is giving description of the object to the reader clearly.

From the definition above, it can be concluded that description paragraph is a paragraph that describes a particular person, place or event in great deal. Description writing vividly portrays a person, place, or things in such a way that the reader can visualize the topic and enter into the writer's experience. It is a way to enrich others forms of writing or as a dominant strategy for developing a picture of what something looks like.

Furthermore, Jolly (1984:470) asserts there are five types of descriptive writing paragraph. They are:

- a. Describing Process
Describing a process not only explains how something was done, but also explains why it was done and what was needed to complete the process.
- b. Describing and event
To describe an event, a writer should be able to memorize and remember what happened in the event. Supposed the writer will write about Tsunami that was happened in Japan. In this case, he / she has to explain all details related to the event, so that the readers can imagine the real situation and condition.
- c. Describing a personality
In describing a person, the first thing that we do was recognizing his/her individual characteristics. We need to describe people occurs fairly areas of physical attribute (hair, eyes), emotional (warm, nervous), moral attributes (greedy, honest, worthy, trust), and intellectual (cleverness, perception)
- d. Describing a place
Presenting something concrete was the way to describe place, for example: a home, a hospital, and school.
- e. Describing an object
To describe an object accurately was done by providing the physical characteristics of the object such as the color, form, shape, and so on.

Part of Descriptive Text

There are three part of descriptive text. They are: 1. Social function, which is to describe a particular person, places, or things. 2. Generic Structure, which is divided in to two. They are: a) identification: identifies the phenomenon to be described, and b) description: describe parts, qualities, characteristics. 3. Significant lexico-grammatical feature, that is focus on specific participant, use simple present tense. (<http://teacherside.blogspot.com>). Other source, Pardiyono (2007:34) maintain that three parts of descriptive, they are (1) communicative purpose, that was to describe an object (human and non-human), (2) rhetorical structure, there are two parts of rhetorical structure a) identification, that was statement that consist of one topic to describe; b) description, that was consist of the detail description about object that identify in identification,

and (3) grammatical patterns, it was needed to understand that in descriptive paragraph, declarative sentence was used and using present forms.

From the two explanations above, we can conclude that the part of descriptive paragraph was divided in to three parts, they are:

- a. Social Function
Describe the characteristics and conditions of the object person, thing, place, or animal) by using adjective and attribute.
- b. Generic structure
It was divided into two part they are a) identification was to identify the phenomenon that was described, and b) description was to describe the qualities, characteristics, condition, and part of an object in detail.
- c. Grammatical feature
In description paragraph, it uses present tense as normally.

Think Pair Share (TPS)

The think, pair, share strategy is a cooperative learning technique that encourages individual participation and was applicable across all grade levels and class sizes. Students think through questions using three distinct steps:

1. **Think:** Students think independently about the question that has been posed, forming ideas of their own.
2. **Pair:** Students are grouped in pairs to discuss their thoughts. This step allows students to articulate their ideas and to consider those of others.
3. **Share:** Student pairs share their ideas with a larger group, such as the whole class. Often, students are more comfortable presenting ideas to a group with the support of a partner. In addition, students' ideas have become more refined through this three-step process.
(www.teachervasion.fen.com)

On the other hand, Think-Pair-Share is a strategy designed to provide students with "food for thought" on a given topics enabling them to formulate individual ideas and share these ideas with another student. It is a learning strategy developed by Lyman and associates to encourage student classroom participation. Rather than using a basic recitation method in which a teacher poses a question and one student offers a response, Think-Pair-Share encourages a high degree of pupil response and can help keep students on task.

The steps of Think Pair Share

1. With students seated in teams of 4, have them number them from 1 to 4.
2. Announce a discussion topic or problem to solve. (Example: Which room in our school was larger, the cafeteria or the gymnasium? How could we find out the answer?)
3. Give students at least 10 seconds of think time to THINK of their own answer. (Research shows that the quality of student responses goes up significantly when you allow "think time.")

4. Using student numbers, announce discussion partners. (Example: For this discussion, Student #1 and #2 was partners. At the same time, Student #3 and #4 will talk over their ideas.)
5. Ask students to PAIR with their partner to discuss the topic or solution.
6. Finally, randomly call on a few students to SHARE their ideas with the class.

Teachers may also ask students to write or diagram their responses while doing the Think-Pair-Share activity. Think, Pair, Share helps students develop conceptual understanding of a topic, develop the ability to filter information and draw conclusions, and develop the ability to consider other points of view.

(<http://olc.spsd.sk.ca>)

METHODOLOGY

This research is conducted as an action research procedure since involved a substantive act with a research procedure to find the improvement. Stringer (2007:1) maintains that action research is a systematic approach to investigation that enables people to find effective solutions to problems they confront in their everyday life. Action research focused on specific situations and localized solutions. Action research provided the means by which people in schools, business and community organizations; teachers; and health and human services may increase the effectiveness of the work in which they are engaged.

In this research, the data was collected by quantitative and qualitative approach. Quantitative data is collected by administrating composition text and qualitative was one research method that was describing the situation and the event (Sugyono, 2004:4).

Quantitative data is collected through evaluation sheet, which is administrated by the researcher. For gathering the qualitative data, the researcher used observation sheet, interview sheet and questionnaire. Observation sheet is used to identify all the condition that happened during the teaching learning process including teacher, students and the context of situation that are done by the collaborator, interview sheet is used when the writer want to identify the problems occurred in the learning process and questionnaire as the personal records which usually taken by the writer that was written up daily.

A collaborator is asked to observe and evaluate all the situations during the teaching learning process, the researcher, the students and the class in the teaching learning process.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The students' score increases from first evaluation to third evaluation. The writer gives the evaluation in second, fourth, and six meeting. During the research, it was found out that the students' score kept improving from first evaluation to last evaluation. By application TPS the students' score was significantly improved. The ranges of score improvement can be seen in the following table:

Table 1: Range of Score Improvement

Range of Score Improvement	Total Students
26-36	7
21-25	8
16-20	9
11-15	5
6-10	3
Number of Students	32

a. Students who got the improvement score about 26-30:

- from 60-90
- from 60-90
- from 60-90
- from 60-90
- from 65-94
- from 60-88
- from 62-89

There were 7 students who got the improvement of score 26 – 30. They were students who did not like English. But, after the teacher paid attention to them more, asked them problem, and applied TPS Method, they became interested in writing descriptive text.

b. Students who got the improvement score about 21-25

- from 65-90
- from 65-90
- from 63-88
- from 65-90
- from 70-93
- from 67-90
- from 65-87
- from 65-86

There were 8 students who got the improvement of score 21 – 25. They were active students during teaching learning process. Almost of them got points 87 up in the last evaluation. They were active from the first until the last meeting in asking questions and they discussed every problem that they faced with their own team and pair so that their scores also kept improving.

c. Students who got the improvement score about 16-20

- from 64-84
- from 70-90
- from 69-89
- from 63-83
- from 68-87
- from 70-88
- from 73-90

- from 70-86
- from 74-90

There were 9 students who got the improvement of score 16 – 20. Even though the improvement was not so high, it did not mean the students in this range were not competent in writing descriptive text. Two of them achieved satisfying score up to 90 that are PH and SF in the last evaluation. Then the low score in this range was just 83, it meant they could pass the test well.

d. Students who got the improvement score about 11-15

- from 75-90
- from 70-85
- from 70-85
- from 65-80
- from 60-75

There were 5 students who got the improvement of the score 11-15. The score improvement was not too high almost students in this range were smart students. There was one student who got the score just 75 in the last evaluation. It was RTI, but RTI still passed the evaluation. Because they were very smart students, sometimes they did not pay attention to the teacher and in their own team, they were not serious to hear the explanation. But, they kept improve their score until the last writing evaluation because of the TPS method.

e. Students who got the improvement score about 6-10

- from 80-90
- from 76-85
- from 73-80

There were 3 students who got the improvement of score 6-10. The score improvement was low, but in these range just three students who got the improvement from 6 until 10. Then no one got lower than 80. It meant they are good students but they did not pay attention to the lesson that was given by the teacher.

There were difference in the lowest and the highest of students' writing score in each writing evaluation, which was given during the research. The differences showed that there was a significant improvement of students' writing. The improvement of students' score in each writing evaluation can be seen in the following table:

Table 2: Comparison Score of Students' Writing Evaluation

Type of Score	Evaluation I	Evaluation II	Evaluation III
	M1	M4	M6
	Cycle I	Cycle II	
Lowest Score	60	70	75
Highest Score	80	85	90
N	32	32	32

Note: M = Meeting N = Number of Students

From the table above, it was seen that students' score kept improving. In writing evaluation I, the lowest score was 60 and the highest score was 80. In writing Evaluation II, the lowest score was 70 and the highest score was 85 whereas in the last writing evaluation, the lowest score was 75 and the highest score was 90. It showed the significant improvement in students' writing descriptive text.

The improvement of students' score in writing descriptive text through TPS (Think Pair Share) also can be seen from the mean of the students' score in every writing evaluation. The mean of students' score can be seen below:

$$\begin{aligned} X_{fi} &= \frac{2126}{32} \\ X_{fi} &= 2500 \\ X_{fi} &= \frac{2802}{32} \end{aligned}$$

Table 3: The Improvement of Mean Scores of Students' Writing

Meeting	Total Score	Mean
Evaluation I (Cycle I)	I	2126
Evaluation II (Cycle I)	II	2500
Evaluation III (Cycle II)	III	2802

The mean of the students' score in the first meeting was the lowest of all meetings. In the last meeting, the students' score improved. From the data analysis, the mean score of the students' writing increased from 66, 4375 to 87, 5635. It meant that the ability of students in writing descriptive text was improved.

In this research, the indicator of successful in writing descriptive text was if 75 % of students have got score up to 75 in their writing evaluation because the English passing grade at the school was 75. The number of the students who were competent in writing descriptive text was calculated below:

$$P1 = \frac{2}{32} \times 100\% = 6,25\%$$

$$P1 = \frac{26}{32} \times 100\% = 81,25\%$$

$$P1 = \frac{32}{32} \times 100\% = 100\%$$

Table 4: the Percentage of Students' Writing Descriptive Text

Evaluation	Cycle	Meeting	Students who got score 75 up	Percentage
I	I	I	2	6,25%
II	I	IV	26	81,25%
III	II	VI	32	100%

In writing evaluation I, there were 2 students who got point 75 up. The percentage of students' achievement in descriptive text kept increasing when TPS method was applied. In the first cycle, 6,25% students got points 75 up whereas in the second cycle 100% students who got points 75 up. The range of the first meeting (6,25%) and the last meeting (100%) was 93,75%. It had been proved that 93,75% students got the good score on their writing achievement. It can be concluded that TPS method worked effectively and efficiently in helping students in improving their achievement in writing descriptive text.

Qualitative Data

The qualitative data were taken from observation sheet, questionnaire sheet and interview that gained within two cycles.

Observation Sheet

From the result of observation sheet, it can be concluded that teaching learning process by applying TPS method run well. The situation of teaching learning process was comfort, lively, and enjoyable. Because from the data that was taken from the first (I) meeting to the last (VI) meeting we can find out that the Note in the data got good and very good. It means the score in this data was just gotten from 3 to 4.

So this TPS method created a good environment in teaching learning writing in which students became active in the process of writing, focus their mind to the teachers' explanation, and share in their team and pair and then finish in individually. In individually work, the students could improve their confidence to finish the work because they had discussed in team and pair.

Interview

From the interview data those were taken by the teacher and the students from the first meeting and the last meeting, we could find out that the teacher was very interesting to the students because the students were very active and enjoyed with English but students ability in writing

descriptive text was not good enough and then the teacher did not have effort to improve it. From the interview with the students in the first meeting, it can be found out that the students very interesting with English and most of the students like to write descriptive text, because from 6 students that the writer interviewed said like. So from this data we can conclude that most of the students like to write the descriptive text. That was why it was needed to improve their achievement in writing descriptive text by the application of TPS.

From the second interview that was taken from teacher, it can be find out that the application of TPS in teaching learning process especially in writing descriptive text was very helpful to improve the ability of students in writing descriptive text. And according to the teacher this method was very good because can make the students became active and enjoy the lesson.

Furthermore, from the last interview that was taken from the students it can be find out that most of the students like this method and the said that this method was very good to improve their achievement in writing descriptive text because they could be active and enjoy the material. And from the 6 students, all of them said TPS was very good and just one student said that it was very busy but the student also like.

So, from the entire interview, it can be concluded that TPS method was very good to improve the students' achievement in writing descriptive text at Junior High School, grade IX and the teacher will apply TPS in teaching learning process not only writing but also another subject.

Questionnaire

From the result of questionnaire, it can be found out that TPS method can improve the achievement of students because from the data no one of the students fill in disagree and strongly disagree then no more than 4 students fill in the neutral. So most of the students fill in agree and strongly agree. It meant that this TPS method was very good for the students.

In significantly, from the data that was taken from questionnaire sheet I we could account that from the statement 1 until statement 8, the percentage of strongly agree was 331 with mean 41, 40625%, agree 431, 25 % with mean 53, 90625 % , neutral 37, 5 % with mean 4, 6875 % and disagree and strongly disagree 0 %. So, from this questionnaire data we can concluded that the students was very interesting and enjoy the TPS method in teaching learning process especially in writing descriptive text.

Besides that, from the data that was taken from the questionnaire sheet 2 it can be found in the first statement that the percentage of students who chosen a was 71,875 %, b was 3, 125 %, c was 25 % and d was 9, 375 %. It meant that most of students had learned to work to gather from this TPS method. So they were active in teaching learning process. And then from the statement 2 the students who chosen a was 43, 75 %, b was 28,125 %, c was 15, 625 % and d was 12, 5 %. It meant that most of students had learned about pair accountability and pair responsibility. In additional, from the statement 3 the students who chosen was 84, 375%, b was 6, 25 %, c was 6, 25 % and d was 3, 125 %. It meant that most of students in this research had learned to produce something alone.

From the all questionnaire data, it can be concluded that the students were very interesting and enjoying the TPS method and they the students were not only improve their achievement in writing descriptive text but also improve their teamwork, responsibility and self-confidence.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

Having analyzed the data that have been presented in the previous chapter, it was found that average scores of students in every evaluation kept improving. It can be said that there is a significant improvement on the students' achievement in writing descriptive text by applying the application of Think Pair Share method. It can be seen from the improvement of mean of students' score, namely: the mean of first evaluation (66,4375) sharply increased to the mean of second and the third evaluation, which have 78,125 and 87,5625 respectively. The score continuously improve from the first evaluation to the third evaluation. Observation result shows that the students give their good attitudes and responses during teaching and learning process by applying the application of TPS (Think Pair Share) method. Questionnaire and interview report shows that students agree that the application of TPS (Think Pair Share) method have helped them in writing descriptive text. It can be concluded that the application of TPS method significantly improves students' achievement in writing descriptive text.

Suggestion

The result of this study showed that the application of TPS method could improve students' achievement in writing descriptive text. In relation to the conclusion above, some points are suggested, as follow:

1. The English teachers are suggested to use TPS (Think Pair Share) method as teaching method to stimulate the students' learning writing spirit in teaching writing process.
2. For the readers who are interested for further study (university students) related to this research should explore the knowledge to enlarge the understanding about how to improve students' achievement in writing and search another reference.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There are three limitations of this study; the first is administration procedure as the school in which the research was conducted was very difficult to get the permission from the Head Master. The researcher had to get the permission letter from the office of education as the requirement of doing the research. Unluckily, the researcher had spent the time to get the letter for two weeks. The second is the facilities on the school. There were many media that cannot be provided by the school so that the researcher had to take the media from other institution. The last but not least is the cooperation with the students. Some of the students did not want to fill in the questionnaire, as we know this is one of the assessments in this study.

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