

USING WRITING PROCESS APPROACH (WPA) TO IMPROVE THE EIGHT GRADE STUDENTS' ABILITY IN MASTERING WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT

(An Experimental Study at SMP Negeri 1 Simeulue Barat)

¹ Nora Fitria, and ^{2*}Mela Monita

^{1,2} Department of English Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Serambi Mekkah, Banda Aceh, Indonesia

*Corresponding author: mela.monitaheldiana98@gmail.com

Abstract

The aim of this study was to find out if there any significant differences between the students are taught descriptive text writing by using WPA and those without. This study used experimental research design. The population of this study was all eight grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Simeulue Barat, and the total population was 32 students. The sample of this study was the students of classes VIIIA and VIIIB. There were divided into two groups: the experimental and control groups. This study also used non random sampling. The data was collected from pre-test and post-test. The t-test analysis technique in this study used the SPSS 18 for windows. The mean of this study of post-test of the experimental group is 74.37, while the control group is 58.12. The writer obtained the results of in the $t\text{-count} = 4.42$, while $t\text{-table} = 2.05$. So, the provisions in the different test if the $t\text{-count}$ is higher than $t\text{-table}$ then difference is real and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted and the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected. Therefore, in this study there was a significant difference in the achievement of writing descriptive text by using WPA. The use of WPA in teaching writing descriptive text is effective to be applied in the context at SMP Negeri 1 Simeulue Barat. Finally, the researchers suggest to teachers that students should use WPA in teaching descriptive text.

Keywords: writing process approach, writing descriptive text

1. Introduction

Nowadays, writing skill is needed. Everyone cannot be separated from writing activities. According to Amado (2010), writing is an important vehicle that should be taught for self-expression and support students' creative process. It can be known that from the increasing daily activities of people in this world. The use of written language is mostly applied by people in the world to communicate with other people to make their activities easier and more efficient. As a result, writing skills become an important skill in developing a written product. Therefore, people need to master this skill to be able to write and to communicate with others well.

Sharpies (2009) states that it is an enormous challenge to produce "a coherent, fluent, extended piece of writing" in one's second or foreign language. This is magnified by the fact that the rhetorical conventions of English text- the structure, style, and organization often differ from the convention in other languages. Thus, it requires effort to recognize and manage the differences.

In the context of education, writing skills are very important for students to learn because this skill is one of the skills that are considered difficult. Richard and Renandya (2002), state that writing is the most difficult skill for second or foreign language learners to master. Many students face difficulties in writing, even though the writing is something students usually do. The difficulties experienced by students were also marked by inadequate writing sub-skills. According to, Sparrt, Pulveness, and Williams (2005), sub-skills are related to the accuracy, i.e., using the correct forms of language. Writing that is considered accurate involves spelling, forming correct letters, clear writing, correct choice of vocabulary, using grammar, combining correct sentences, and using paragraphs correctly. These sub-skills are quite complex for students in the writing class.

The researchers choose the writing process approach in teaching descriptive text because she believed to set and increase the student's confidence and interest. It can also make the students more involved in the learning process that leads to understanding the writing so that they can make sense of writing activities in their real life and they can be more motivated. Further, one study by Kalesu (2005), found that using the writing process approach in teaching writing skills especially writing a descriptive paragraph can encourage learners to feel free to convey their ideas and encourage creative thinking and writing.

However, this study had never been done before at SMP Negeri 1 Simeulue Barat. Therefore, the author wants to investigate the reason students at SMP Negeri 1 Simeulue Barat writing process approach in their writing descriptive text, and how they use writing process approach to improve the eighth-grade students' ability in mastering writing descriptive text.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Writing Skill

Generally, writing means expressing in writing the ideas, opinions, or thoughts and feelings that are manifested in language. The content of expressions through that language will be understood by other people or readers if it is written in an orderly, systematic, simple, and easy to understand language. In line with the above opinion, Slamet (2009), argues that writing is not just giving birth to thoughts or feelings, but also an expression of ideas, knowledge, and someone's life experience in written language.

2.2 Types of Writing

Nurudin (2010), mentions five forms or types of writing. Types of writing as follows: 1). Description is a type of writing that aims to provide impressions to the reader on object, ideas, places, phenomenon and the like what the researcher want to convey. 2). Narrative, which is a type of writing that tries to tell the occurrence of a phenomenon. 3). Exposition is a type of writing that aims to explain convey or describe something that can expand or add to the knowledge or views of the reader. 4). Argumentation is a type of writing that aims convey and opinion or conception, in writing to the reader. 5). Persuasion that is type of writing are shown to influence the attitudes and opinion of the readers about something that was conveyed.

2.3 Descriptive Paragraph

Descriptive writing appeals to the sense and describes the object, place, or person (Oshima & Hogue, 2006; and Sabrina, et.al., 2020). A good descriptive paragraph consists of topic sentences and supporting sentences that provide the details of the topic sentence. As the important element of a good paragraph is unity, the descriptive paragraph should also represent unity, all the supporting sentences discuss one idea and have something to do with the topic.

2.4 Understanding of WPA (Writing Process Approach)

The writing process approach, which is a writing learning approach that emphasizes the writing process. Tompkins and Hoskisson (2005), propose the stages of the writing process including prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. The main focus in the process approach is how the writer finds

develops, and improves the text. "The process approach basically emphasizes the aspect of the process as a real writer goes through" (Zainurrahman, 2011:8).

The process approach is assumed to be appropriate for learning to write a descriptive paragraph. The process approach according to Tompkins (2005) is an approach in learning to write with several stages. These stages are prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publication.

In practice, the writing process approach according to Tompkins (2005 cited in Miftah 2015) presented in five stages can be described as follows:

Prewriting

Prewriting is the preparatory stage for writing. This stage is very important and determines the next stages of writing. This stage focused on thinking about the topic, brainstorming, and planning. According to Gebhard's (2000), brainstorming is an activity in which students call out ideas associated with the topic while the teacher (a student or two) write ideas on the board. In addition, Raimes (2003), points out that brainstorming is an activity to produce words, phrases, ideas as rapidly as possible without concern for appropriateness, order, or accuracy. In this stage, students are assigned to employ the prewriting techniques such as clustering, idea listing, freewriting, etc. The teacher can explain that the writing that the students will write is a descriptive writing to describe something (Miftah, 2015).

Drafting

Drafting focuses on equipping students to start writing based on the ideas they have made in the previous stage. Drafting is also a stage that has been designed so that writer can put their ideas on paper without attention to the use of spelling, terms, or sentence structure. According to Miftah (2015), Students are more focused on the arrangement of ideas, especially ideas in their own language style by checking whether: 1) the essay contains identification or not, 2) the essay contains the composition of the descriptive text or not, 3) the essay contains language features (the use of simple present form, adjectives, verb, have, look, seem, etc.) or not (Miftah, 2015).

Revising

At the revision stage, students are guided to improve the draft model step by step. Therefore, in this activity students focus on checking the draft whether: 1) each paragraph has a topic sentence or not, 2) the essay sentence and topic sentence clear or not, 3) each paragraph is well organized or not, 4) the paragraph uses sentence connector or not, 5) the first sentence of each paragraph is indented or not. (Miftah, 2015).

Editing

The focus of this writing stage is to make changes to the aspects of the essay. Students correct their text by correcting spelling or other mistakes. Its purpose is to make the text easier for other people to read. At the editing stage, students are asked to reviewing, correct spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation with the help of friends or teachers. So that it becomes good writing. (Miftah, 2015).

Publication

The last step is publication. Where at this stage students are given the opportunity to publish the final product of the students' writing. To do so, students are asked to read the final results of their peers in front of the class or small groups. (Miftah, 2015).

3. Research Method

This research was conducted using quantitative research with an experimental design (experimental group and control group) adopted from Arikunto (2013). Both groups were treated unequally, where the control group used learning from the teacher, while the experimental group used the writing process approach in learning writing descriptive text. The population of this study was all eighth grade of students at SMP Negeri 1 Simeulue Barat, consists of two classes, VIII1 and VIII2. Which

later will be selected to be the sample in this study. The sample in this study is the students of class VIII1 and VIII2 at SMP Negeri 1 Simeulue Barat. Every group consists of 16 students. They were divided into two groups. One class for the experimental group and one class for control groups. This study also used non-random sampling.

This study used data collection techniques by means of tests in essay form. This data collection technique can obtain relevant data and in accordance with the needs as a measuring tool in carrying out a study. Test essays are used to measure the ability to write descriptive text, especially descriptive paragraphs, through the writing process approach.

In the test, the researcher asked the students to create a descriptive paragraph. Next, the researcher would identify the effectiveness of the strategy used by the writer in improving their ability in writing descriptive text. This test would be divided into two groups: pre-test and post-test. The pre-test is given in order to know the condition of the students before treatment and the post-test is given to know the effect of the method.

4. Results and Discussion

In accordance with the above methodology, this research was conducted by determining the sample first. Then divided into two groups, namely the control and experimental groups, the two groups were given different treatments. The control group was given treatment using the conventional method namely writing descriptive text without using writing process approach. While the experimental group was given treatment by using the writing process approach in writing descriptive text. Both groups did a pre-test first, then were given treatment and after that was given a post-test.

Meanwhile, the scores on the pre-test and post-test of the control and experimental groups. The total score obtained from the control group is 790 for the pre-test and post-test which was 930. The difference in scores between the pre-test and post-test in the control group was 140. Furthermore, the total score obtained in the experimental group was 800 for the pre-test and 1190 for the post-test. So that the difference in scores between pre-test and post-test is 390. This data is obtained from students' intellectual achievement in writing descriptive texts.

Table 1. The total score of pre-test and post-test of the control and experimental groups.

Group	The total score of pre-test and post-		The differences between two	
	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
Control Group	790,00	930,00	49,37	58,12
Experiment Group	800,00	1190,00	50,00	74,37
Total	1590,00	2120,00	49,68	66,25

Based on the analysis, the assessment uses O'malley and Pierce on the results of student composition where each percentage is taken from three items that are Content/Organization, Grammar, Mechanics are as follows:

Table 2. Percentage of the Total of the Three Items

Group	Content / Organization (%)	Grammar (%)	Mechanics (%)
Control	29,09	32,09	37,32
Experiment	35,31	30,05	36,36
Total	32,20	31,07	36,84

The data was obtained from the students' writing achievement in descriptive text. The following is a table showing the average scores for pre-test and post-test for each item.

Table 3. The Average Scores for Pre-test and Post-test

Group item of writing scoring	The average score pre-test and post-test		
	Control	Experiment	Total
Content/Organization Pre-test	13,75	18,12	15,93
Grammar Pre-test	16,87	12,50	14,68
Mechanics Pre-test	18,75	19,37	19,06
Content/Organization Post-test	18,12	26,25	22,18
Grammar Post-test	19,37	23,75	21,56
Mechanics Post-test	20,62	24,37	22,50

The table below is a list of achievements based on the level for both groups.

Table 4. The List of Control Group Score

Level	Test			
	Pretest		Posttest	
	Result		Result	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very Poor	10	62,5%	4	25,0%
Poor	5	31,3%	11	68,8%
Fair	1	6,3%	0	0%
Good	0	0%	1	6,3%
Total	16	100,0%	16	100,0%

Table 5. The List of Experiment Group Score

Level	Test			
	Pretest		Posttest	
	Result		Result	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very Poor	13	81,3%	0	0%
Poor	1	6,3%	5	31,3%
Fair	2	12,5%	3	18,8%
Good	0	0%	4	25,0%
Very Good	0	0%	4	25,0%
Total	16	100,0%	16	100,0%

So that the differences between the two groups (control and experiment) are easier to understand, the writer applied the average score into charts as follows:

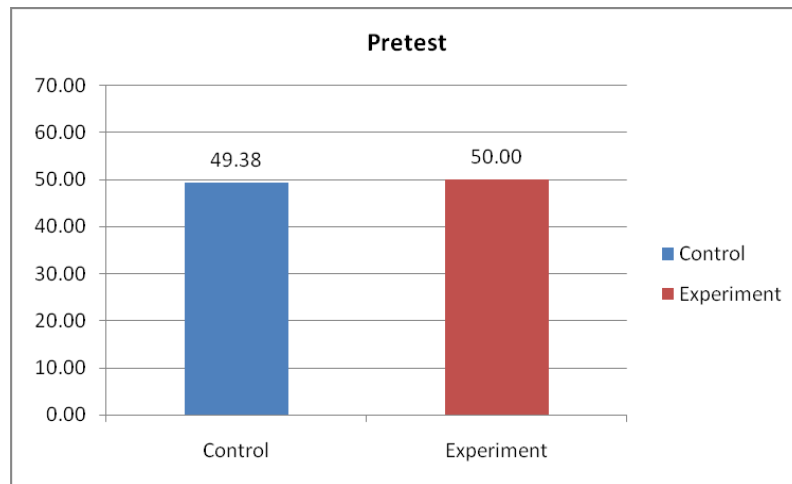


Chart 1 shows the achievement of the pre-test by the control and experimental groups. Based on the chart, the students in the experimental group got an average score was 50.00. While the results of the pre-test of the students in the control group were students who got an average score of 49.38.

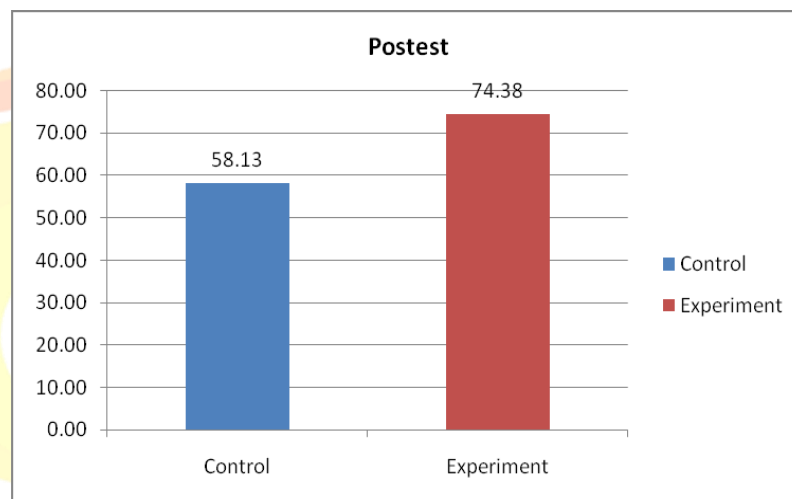


Chart 2 shows the achievement of the post-test by the control and experimental groups. Based on the chart, the students in the experimental group got an average score was 74.38. While the results of the post-test of the students in the control group were students who got an average score was 58.13.

Table 6. Statistical group on the post-test of experimental and the control groups

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experiment Group	16	74,37	12,093	3,023
Control Group	16	58,12	8,341	2,085

Table 7. Independent Sample Test

	Post-test	
	Equal variances assumed	Equal variances not assumed

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	F	6,914	
t-test for Equality of Means	Sig. t-df	,013	
		4,424	4,424
		30	26,63
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000
	Mean Difference	16,25	16,25
	Std. Error Difference	3,67	3,67
	95% Confidence Interval Lower of the Difference	8,74	8,70
	Upper	23,75	23,79

t-tabel (5%;df 27)=2,052

Based on the table above, the researcher obtained the results of the t-test and consulted the critical result from the t-table to find out whether there was a significant difference or not. In the t-count = 4.424, while the t-table= 2.052. So, the provisions in the different test if the t-count is higher than t-table then the difference is real and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted and the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected and vice versa.

Discussion

Based on the comparative data of the experimental and control groups, it was found that those who worked on descriptive texts with the help of the writing process approach experienced an increase, in other words, this research was related to or supported previous studies on the writing process approach, including the research of Wibowo (2013), the purpose of this study was to find out if writing skills can be improved using the writing process approach. This study was conducted for grade X students' of SMA Negeri 1 Kasihan Bantul. The research design used was an experimental study which was divided into two groups, were experimental and control groups. The experimental group was given treatment in a form of teaching, writing process approach include this exercise. The finding on the result of Wibowo (2013) study was found that their mean score in the post-test from were 2.31 increased to 3.00. in other words, students' writing skills can be improved by using the writing process approach. Another study by Junaedui (2016) the purpose of this study was to find out writing exposition text can be improved using the writing process approach. This study was conducted for grade X students' of SMA Negeri 1 Cisaat, Sukabumi. The research design used was an experimental study. The experimental group was given a treatment in a form of teaching, writing practice, writing process approach include this exercise. The finding on the result of Junaedi (2016) study was found that their mean score in the post increased to 3.00. Which are higher than the increase in the mean score of the control group which is 0.21. This study support previous research, although the texts used are different and this research adds to the understanding of teaching writing, especially in terms of teaching descriptive texts.

The writing process approach affected the success in paragraph writing in a very positive and statistically significant way. The significant improvement the students' paragraph writing could be attributed to steps in the writing process approach. The steps systematically involved the students in their attempts to turn out the written products, hence enhancing their writing performance. The participants in this study were taught to analyze the structure of a text as part of class activity to raise awareness of how a text has been planned and organized, hence their significantly improved writing performance. The teachers' intervention during the writing process could also attribute to the obvious improvement of the students' writing performance. In this study, the researcher as a teacher intervened by providing not only written but also oral feedback. Particularly, the oral feedback played a pivotal role in this research where the researcher asked reminder questions which focused on both content language to the whole class. This intervention took place before the students wrote their first drafts, during their revision, and before submitting their final drafts. Syananondh and Padgate (2005), claim that one advantage of the writing process approach is that it allows opportunities for the teachers to intervene and support their students-

writers in every stage. Intervening in the process therefore could help the students to realize the important and necessary elements while they are developing their drafts.

5. Conclusions

Based on the results of research and discussion, action in the form of using a process approach can improve the learning process, motivation, and ability to write descriptive texts of students. Students are able to express their ideas. The researcher obtained some results as follows:

1. The use of the writing process approach increases students' motivation to write descriptive texts, it showed a change in attitude that was better than before action. Students become more enthusiastic, thus producing better writing. The using of writing process approach in teaching writing descriptive text is effective to be applied in the context at SMP Negeri 1 Simeulue Barat.
2. From the result of the preliminary observation done in class VIIIA and VIIIB at SMP Negeri 1 Simeulue Barat, there were some problems found related to the teaching and learning of writing. Their problems found were related to the teaching and learning of writing. Their problems were content and organization (generating ideas, arranging sentences, spelling, vocabulary), mechanics (using punctuation), grammar. Besides, the teaching style and students' motivation in learning English also influence the success of teaching and learning writing.

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