The Effectiveness of Activating Students' Peripheral Learning Strategy on Teaching Descriptive Text Writing for the Tenth Graders in SMA Negeri 1 Nganjuk

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ACTIVATING STUDENTS' PERIPHERAL LEARNING STRATEGY ON TEACHING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT WRITING FOR THE TENTH GRADERS IN SMA NEGERI 1 NGANJUK

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui efektifitas dari pengaktifan peripheral learning strategy pada kemampuan menulis teks deskriptif siswa. Dua kelas telah dipilih dan secara acak dibagi menjadi dua kelompok, yaitu kelompok kontrol dan eksperimental. Mereka berada pada tingkat yang sama yaitu pada kelas sepuluh di SMA Negeri 1 Nganjuk. Sebelum memberikan perlakuan khusus, tes menulis telah diberikan pada kedua kelompok sebagai pre-tes. Lalu, peripheral learning dari kelompok eksperimental diaktifkan sebagai perlakuan khusus, sedangkan kelompok kontrol diajar dengan menggunakan metode tradisional. Setelah pemberian perlakuan khusus, post-tes diberikan pada kedua kelompok. Sebuah analisis t-test pada SPSS 16.00 digunakan untuk menganalisa hasil pre-tes dan post-tes dari kelompok kontrol dan eksperimental. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pengaktifan dari peripheral learning strategy memiliki efek yang signifikan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan menulis teks deskriptif siswa, (P<.05).

Kata Kunci: Menulis, Teks Deskriptif, Peripheral Learning Strategy

Abstract

This study is an effort to know the effectiveness of activating students' peripheral learning strategy on students' descriptive text ability. Two classes were selected and randomly divided into two groups, namely experimental and control groups. They were on the same level that is on the tenth grade of SMA Negeri 1 Nganjuk. Before giving the treatment, a writing test was administered to both groups as pre-test. Then, the peripheral learning of experimental group was activated as a treatment, while the control group was taught by traditional way. After giving treatment, a post-test was administered to both groups. A t-test on SPSS 16.00 was used to analyze the result of pre-test and post-test from experimental and control groups. The results showed that the activation of peripheral learning strategy had a significant effect to improve the students' descriptive writing ability, (P<.05).

Keywords: Writing, Descriptive Text, Peripheral Learning Strategy

INTRODUCTION

Writing is a means of communication that enables the writers to synthesize the knowledge they have into an acceptable text which is appropriate with the English writing conventions. It considered as one of the productive skills along with speaking as they engage producing language rather than receiving it (Harmer, 2001). Even if those two skills belong to the same category as productive skill, Bachani (2003) says that writing requires clearer and more comprehensive message than speaking since it is always used by writers to state and communicate their ideas to the readers who are separated by both time and space distances.

In English, writing is an important skill to be mastered in order to communicate effectively, but it becomes the most difficult skill to be mastered since it is an activity that must be learnt by practicing. The difficulties in writing a text are not only in generating and organizing ideas but also in translating these ideas into readable text (Richard and Renandy in Wardhani, 2010). Besides must be able to generate and organize ideas in writing, the students have to manage the content, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, spelling, and letter formation at the same time (Nunan, 2003). Those requirements make student's work to develop their writing ability becomes harder. Moreover, the time allocated for English subject based on the curriculum is very limited, as Sadtono cited by Lestari (1999) states that that one of the causes of the failure in teaching English is the limited number of hours for English classes. Consequently, mastering all of the writing components will be very frustrating for students. Thus, an

appropriate strategy is needed to improve their writing skill so that students can communicate in a good writing.

There are some strategies that can be used by the students to enhance their writing ability; one of them is peripheral learning strategy. Peripheral learning strategy is a strategy which firstly introduced by Georgy Lozanov in 1978. It is based upon the idea that people recognize much more in the environment than that to which they deliberately focus. Larsen (2000) believes that it will help students to study new thing from information which is displayed in the environment although they do not pay attention on it directly. She also says that one of the reasons about the significance of the strategy is that students are recognizing more than what the students focus intentionally from the environment.

Activating students' peripheral learning strategy cannot be separated from the teachers' role since it is needed to make use the classroom and the school environment as the source of the study as creative as possible (Far and Rahmatollah, 2013). Larsen (2000) says that students' peripheral learning strategy can be activated by hanging the grammatical and vocabulary information. The teachers have to design the information form as attractive as possible so that the students will pay attention on it. By seeing the attractive form, the students are not only see the form but also absorbing the knowledge which is written in the form as well. Richards et al (1986) states that learners will understand what they need easily if the information wanted is hung on the classroom wall in an attractive form. The idea of actualizing grammatical and vocabulary information in an attractive form is aimed to make the students not getting bored. As they have big curiosity to know something new, the teachers should make new forms with new information as well.

By activating students' peripheral learning strategy, Larsen (2000) points out that learning becomes obvious and effortless since the students comfortable and convinced. Environment becomes an essential point in teaching-learning process to improve students' spirit to study. From that statement, it is clear that the environment should be explored as well as possible to make the students feel relaxed. When the students enjoy their lesson, their spirit to study will be increased, it also will overcome their burden to study (Richards and Theodore, 1986). In short, by activating students' peripheral learning strategy the students can learn many things indirectly in the classroom or outside classroom. It makes the students to apply language more independently, takes more personal responsibility for their own learning and gets more confidence.

The activation of students' peripheral learning strategy uses the surrounding environment as a study source, so that it is closely related to the use of human sense. The researcher believes that the strategy will be appropriate to be activated on teaching descriptive text writing since Gerot and Wignell cited by Mursyid (1994) states that the text includes detail that appeal to the five senses; sight, taste, touch, smell, and hearing. In a descriptive text, students must convey information that appeals to all of the senses, in order to give the best possible description to the readers. The activation of peripheral learning strategy on teaching descriptive text writing is divided into three parts; pre-writing, whilst-writing, and post-writing (McCrimmon, 1973). Oshima (2006) states that one important key to get success in writing is a well-prepared pre-writing. In pre-writing, the students are divided into several groups; each group should be maximally consisted of five students. In this step, they are asked to make a mind-mapping about the thing that they are going to describe. Mind-mapping is used to make the students' peripheral learning strategy in writing descriptive text becomes more effective. Moore et al (1996) says that clustering is a visual way to look at the writer's ideas and relate them to each other. In whilst-writing, each group gets a blind-map, the map is different one another. And then they are asked to go outside the classroom and follow the route on the map, their job is to take a note about everything which is related to the thing that they are going to describe. In post-writing, students have to work individually to make a descriptive text based on the topic given. From this present study, it is hoped that that the activation of students' peripheral learning strategy can make the learning process of the students become easier so that their descriptive text writing ability will be improved well.

According to the previous study from Far and Rahmatollah (2013) entitled "*The Effects of Peripheral Teaching on Iranian EFL Learners' Writing Skill in Cyber Environments*" which was aimed to find out the effects of peripheral teaching on Iranian EFL learners' writing skills in cyber environments. The result of the study shows that the activation of the strategy in cyber environments had a significant effect on improving Iranian EFL learners' writing skills (P<.05).

Based on the previous study, the researcher wants to conduct further research. In this present study, the researcher wants to know the effectiveness of activating students' peripheral learning strategy on teaching descriptive text writing. The previous study proves that the activation of students' peripheral learning strategy is effective to improve students' writing skill. Thus, the researcher hopes that the activation of students; peripheral learning strategy will develop students' descriptive text writing ability.

Finally, based on the background of the study above, it can be simplified to discuss a question that emerges as a significant concern toward the novel:

1. Is there any significant difference in writing ability of descriptive text between the students whose *peripheral learning* strategy are activated and those who are not?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In conducting this study, experimental research was used as the research design. Experimental research engages a study of the effect on the systematic manipulation of one variable or another variable. The manipulated variable is called the experimental treatment

or independent variable, while the observed and measured variable is called dependent variable. The independent variable of this study was peripheral learning as a strategy on writing ability, and the dependent variable was writing ability of descriptive text. This research was aimed to investigate the effectiveness of activating students' peripheral learning strategy to enhance students' descriptive text writing ability.

Based on the latest curriculum, descriptive test is taught to the tenth graders of senior high school. SMA Negeri 1 Nganjuk was chosen randomly as the population of this research, there are nine classes of the tenth grade in this school and two classes were chosen as the sample of the research by using cluster random sampling; they are X-IIS 1 and X-MIA 5. In experimental study, it is needed to divide the sample into an experimental and control groups, for experimental group was given treatments (activating students' peripheral learning strategy), while control group was not given any treatment. So, the sample was assigned by using random assignment and the result was X-IIS 1 became the control group and X-MIA 5 became the experimental one.

Table 1: Experimental Research Design

Group	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-Test
Experimental	√	√	√
Control	√	-	√

Due to this study was experimental research design, the researcher decided to make use of test. Ary et al (2010) states a test is a set of stimuli presented to an individual in order to elicit responses on the basis of which a numerical score can be assigned. The score which will be gotten from the test is an indicator of the extent to which the subject has the characteristic being measured. In this study, the researcher made use writing test since it investigated the effectiveness of a strategy on students' writing ability. In conducting the test, it was needed to pay attention on the validity and reliability of the test itself. The validity of the test was measured by using content validity. Content validity depends on a careful analysis of the language being tasted and of the particular course objectives (Heaton, 1988). Therefore, in writing test the researcher needed to examine the state's curriculum guide, syllabi, and also lesson plan to make sure that the test was valid because it was appropriate with the lesson plan as a guide in teaching tenth graders. The result of content validity showed that the writing test was valid when matched with the main competence, basic

competence, and sub-basic competence of English subject about descriptive text for the tenth graders of senior high school. Since this study used subjective test as the research instrument, interrater reliability was used as a method to estimate the reliability. Interrater reliability means that the test was administered once and then was scored by two people (Cohen et al, 2000). The students' writing test which has been scored by the raters was analyzed by using SPSS. The interrater reliability was measured by using SPSS. A statistical measure of the reliability is Pearson Product Moment which ranges generally from 0 to 1.0 where large numbers mean better reliability, values near or less than zero suggest that agreement is attributable to change alone. The tryout result was scored by two ratters, and then it was analyzed by using Pearson Correlation on SPSS 16.0. The result showed reliability value of the test was $r = 0.910$. According to level of reliability from Bartz (1976) the tryout test was very reliable, so that it could be used as an instrument in the pre-test and post-test.

Table 2: Level of Reliability

The Criteria	The Description
Very high r (very reliable)	.80 or above
Strong r (reliable)	.60 to .80
Moderate r (reliable enough)	.40 to .60
Low r (less reliable)	.20 to .40
Very low r (not reliable)	.20 or less

In this study, the data were collected by giving pre-test and post-test for both experimental and control groups. Before administering pre-test, the test item was being tried out to the class other than experimental and control groups as the tryout subject, it was aimed to measure the validity and reliability of the writing test. After the validity and reliability of the test were known, pre-test was given to both experimental and control groups in order to know the writing ability of both groups in the beginning of the research. The next step was giving treatment to the experimental group for twice, they were being taught by activating peripheral learning strategy while the control group was being taught by using traditional method. The last step which was done after giving treatment to the experimental group was administering post-test for both experimental and control groups. The result of pre-test and post-test from both groups in the form of number will be analyzed by using t-test analysis on SPSS 16.00. In analyzing the data in

experimental research, the researcher needed to do comparison analysis (t-test) by using SPSS application to find out whether there was a significant difference between two groups (experimental and control group) from the result of pre-test and post-test or not. It was needed to compare the result between experimental and control group by using independent sample t-test. The last step was drawing the conclusion from data analysis on SPSS application. The data was significant if the result (t) is equal to or less than 0.05 ($t \leq 0.05$).

RESULT OF THE STUDY

After considering that the test which was administrated in tryout is valid and reliable, a pre-test was administered to both control and experimental groups to obtain that both of them have an equal ability in writing skill. The test result from both control and experimental groups were scored by using ESL composition profile (Jacobs, et al., 1981). Then, the researcher calculated the score by using Independent Sample T-test on SPSS 16.00. The result will be explained in the table below:

Table 3: Mean Scores of Control and Experimental Group in Pre-Test

Group Statistics					
	Class	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-Test Score	Control Group	30	78.2333	4.44649	.81181
	Experimental Group	30	77.6667	5.04691	.92143

The table shows that the mean score of control group in pre-test was 78.23 (SD = 4.44649) and experimental group was 77.67 (SD = 5.04691). Based on the table above, the researcher found out that control group score was higher than experimental group in pre-test.

Although control group had a higher score than experimental group in pre-test, their writing ability were equal. In order to make sure, the researcher shows Independent Sample T-test analysis that has been used to analyze of pre-test scores both of experimental and control groups in this table below:

Table 4: Independent Sample Test Result of Pre-Test

Independent Sample Test									
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					
								95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Pre-Test Score	Equal variances assumed	.493	.485	.461	58	.646	.56667	1.22804	-1.89152	3.02486
	Equal variances not assumed			.461	57.094	.646	.56667	1.22804	-1.89236	3.02569

The table above shows that the significance level of Levene's test is .485. According to Pallant (2010) when the Sig. Value for Levene's test is larger than .05, it means that there is no significant difference between the two groups. Hence, it can be concluded that the writing ability of control and experimental groups were equal in the pre-test or at the beginning of the study.

After conducting pre-test for control and experimental groups, the experimental group is given treatments which were done twice. The treatments were only given to experimental group, while control group did not get any kind of treatments and being taught as usual in the teaching and learning process.

The next step is administering post-test for control and experimental groups. The post-test was conducted to find out the significance different of students' writing

ability of descriptive text after being given treatments for experimental group while control group got no treatments. Here is the Independent Sample T-test analysis that has been used to analyze post-test scores of both experimental and control groups:

Table 5: The Mean Scores of Control and Experimental Group in Post-Test

Group Statistics					
	Class	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Post-Test Score	Control Group	30	80.0333	4.80290	.87688
	Experimental Group	30	83.2000	5.62261	1.02654

From the table above, it can be seen that the pre-test mean score of control group was 80.03 (SD = 4.80290) and experimental group was 83.20 (SD = 5.62261). The number shows that the post-test score of experimental group was higher than post-test score of control group. In order to make sure that the result was significant, the result of Independent Sample T-test on SPSS 16.0 is shown in the following table:

Table 6: Independent Sample Test Result of Post-Test

Independent Sample Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Post-Test Score	Equal variances assumed	.300	.586	-2.346	58	.022	-3.16667	1.35008	-5.86915	-.46418
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.346	56.617	.023	-3.16667	1.35008	-5.87055	-.46278

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the Sig. (2-tailed) value is .022 or less than .05; it means that the mean scores of post-test of control and experimental groups are significantly different with 95% confidence interval of difference from the lower 5.8691 to the upper .4642 (df = 58, mean difference = 3.167). Pallant (2010) states that if the Sig. (2-tailed) value is equal or less than .05 (e.g. .02. .005, .001), there is a significant different in the mean scores on the dependent variable for each groups. Based on the result above, it can be concluded that there was a significant difference of the mean scores from experimental group on students' writing ability in descriptive text after activating students' peripheral learning strategy for the treatments.

In order to make sure about the effect size of the treatments those were given by the researcher. It is needed to calculate it by using *Eta Square* calculation. Pallant (2010) states that the calculation has three scales, as listed in the table below:

Table 7: *Eta Square* Scale

The Criteria	The Description
Large effect	.14
Moderate effect	.06
Small effect	.01

Here is the Eta Squared calculation of effect size of Independent Sample t-test:

Eta Squared $= t^2/t^2 + (N1 + N2 - 2)$
$= 2.346^2/ 2.346^2 + (30 + 30 - 2)$
$= 5.504/5.504 + 58$
$= 5.504/63.504$
$= 0.087$ (Moderate Effect)

From the calculation, it can be found out that the Eta Squared value is .087 or larger than .06, it means that the treatments were given by the researcher have moderate effect. In another word, it has been answered the alternative hypotheses in the first chapter that there is significant difference in writing ability of descriptive text to the tenth graders of SMA Negeri 1 Nganjuk.

Based on the result above, it can be concluded that the activation of peripheral learning strategy gave a significance effect on the tenth graders' writing ability of

descriptive text. It is proven by the fact that experimental group got higher mean scores than control group in post-test; the scores had a significant difference after peripheral learning strategy had been activated. The improvement of students' descriptive text ability was proven by the improvement of all components that were scored by using ESL composition profile includes content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics.

The way to activate students' peripheral learning strategy is by exploring surrounding environment as a study source in order to make the students feel relaxed. Richard and Theodore (1986) states that when the students enjoy the learning process their spirit to study will be increased, it also will overcome their reluctance to study.

In the previous study which had been conducted by Smith in Far et al (2013), it shows that activating students' peripheral learning strategy makes students learn new information and knowledge indirectly inside and outside classroom effectively. Rokni (2014) adds that peripheral learning is a way to encourage learners to indulge in self-learning through indirect strategy.

On the other hand, Laufer (1997) states that the activation of peripheral learning strategy may lead to some problems like wrong inferences, superficial vocabulary learning, and false cognates on vocabulary learning. While in this study, the activation of peripheral learning strategy gave a significant improvement on students' writing ability.

With respect to the research question "Is there any significant difference in writing ability of descriptive text between the students whose peripheral learning strategy are activated and those who are not?", after comparing the result of students' writing in pre-test and post-test between control and experimental group, it can be answered that the writing ability of experimental group whose peripheral learning are activated has a significant difference than the control group who are not. Therefore, the implementation of peripheral learning strategy is effective to be applied for the tenth graders in writing descriptive text.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the result of the research that was obtained, it can be concluded that the tenth graders' writing ability of SMA Negeri 1 Nganjuk from both control and experimental groups is significantly different. It can be seen from the post-test result of experimental group who was given treatments was higher than control group who did not get any treatments. It is proven by the Sig. (2-tailed) value is .022 and the eta squared is .087 which means that activating students' peripheral learning strategy has a moderate effect towards the students' writing ability especially for descriptive text. Hence, it can be concluded that peripheral learning strategy is effective to be applied to teach writing a descriptive text for the tenth graders.

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