

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF *THINK-TALK-WRITE* STRATEGY TO TEACH WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT TO THE SEVENTH GRADERS OF SMPN 7 SURABAYA

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Abstrak

Menulis sangatlah penting untuk dikuasai dikarenakan banyak fungsinya yang didapat dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Namun, menulis adalah pekerjaan yang sulit dan membosankan untuk pelajar terutama pemula. Faktanya, pemula seringkali kurang menguasai kosakata serta unsur kebahasaan akan suatu teks komposisi. Mereka sering membuat error dalam pendeskripsian obyek. Hal ini dikarenakan, mereka mempunyai pemahaman yang kurang tentang mengekspresikan ide mereka kedalam Bahasa Inggris. Maka dari itu, *Think-Talk-Write* (TTW) digunakan untuk mengatasi masalah diatas. Strategi TTW dipilih karena sejalan dengan proses menulis yang dikemukakan oleh pakar. Terlebih lagi, kegiatan dalam strategi TTW dapat membantu siswa dalam pembelajaran menulis teks deskripsi. Maka dari itu, peneliti ingin mengetahui implementasi dari strategi TTW dalam pembelajaran menulis teks deskripsi untuk murid kelas tujuh dan respons dari siswa mengenai pembelajaran menulis menggunakan strategi ini. Catatan lapangan dan kuesioner digunakan untuk mendeskripsikan implementasi strategi TTW serta untuk mendapatkan respon dari siswa terkait pengimplementasian strategi TTW. Hasil dari penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi TTW adalah strategi yang tepat dalam membantu siswa untuk mempraktekkan serta meningkatkan kemampuan mereka dalam menulis teks deskripsi setelah melakukan kegiatan kegiatan yang disungkan dalam implementasi dari strategi TTW. Strategi ini juga mendorong memotivasi siswa untuk mengembangkan, berbagi, membetulkan serta mengedit gagasan-gagasan siswa sebelum menuangkannya kedalam produk akhir dari teks komposisi deskripsi mereka.

Kata kunci: *Strategi Think-Talk-Write, Mengajar menulis, teks deskripsi*

Abstract

Writing is important to be mastered since it brings a lot of benefit in daily life. However, writing is difficult and boring activity for learners especially beginners. It is a common fact that they often lack vocabulary and have a low mastery of composition text knowledge, i.e. descriptive text. They often made errors in describing an object because they still have misconception in translating their ideas into English form. Therefore, *Think-Talk-Write* (TTW) strategy used to overcome those problem above, seeing that it is in line with the process of writing. Moreover, the activities in TTW strategy could assist the students in creating composition text such as descriptive text. Thus, the researcher would like to know the implementation of TTW strategy to teach writing descriptive text to the seventh graders and their responses toward the implementation of TTW strategy. Field notes and questionnaire are used to describe the implementation of TTW strategy and to gain the students' responses toward their learning of writing descriptive text assisted by TTW strategy. The result of this study was TTW strategy is appropriate strategy to assist the students in practicing and improving their writing ability by doing the activities suggested by the experts. It also encourages and motivates the students to develop, share, revise, and edit their ideas before they make the final product of writing

Keywords: *Think-Talk-Write Strategy, Teaching writing, Descriptive text*

INTRODUCTION

Nunan (2003:88) stated that writing is the mental work of invention ideas, thinking about how to express them into statements and paragraphs. Writing is a skill which is categorized as a productive skill. In order to master this skill, the learner should know and understand the components of writing. Halliday cited in Nunan (1999:275) added that written language has a number of functions in daily life, they are: 1) for action; for example public signs, traffic symbols, product labels, television and radio guides and any instruction, 2) for information, such as newspaper, magazine, non-fiction story, scientific paper, advertisement, politic pamphlets, etc., 3) for entertainment, for example fiction books, comic strips, poetry, drama, newspaper features, etc. In other hand, writing is essential for the people who could not deliver their ideas fluently in oral way. From the statement above, it can be seen that writing brings a lot of benefits in daily life.

Further, there are some types of texts that are taught to beginners in junior high school. They are advertisement, announcement, descriptive, recount, and procedure. All of them are clearly stated in learning curriculum and had to be mastered by seventh graders. For beginners, descriptive text is the first composition text which is taught to the students before other composition texts such as recount, narrative and etc. Descriptive text itself is a text which aims to describe a particular person, object or place.

According to the curriculum of 2013, one of the objectives of learning descriptive text is to create a simple written descriptive text about people, animal and things using proper linguistic and generic features of it. Nunan (1991) stated that writing is difficult not only for second or foreign language learners but also for native language learners. Further, it is a common fact that beginners often had misconception in translating their ideas into English. This matter indicates that the students need assistance in their learning such as technique, strategy or games which makes their learning better and the product of their learning become clearer and more meaningful.

One of strategies that can be used to assist the students in learning writing descriptive text is TTW strategy. TTW strategy is a strategy which consists of 3 stages. Those are *think*, *talk* and *write*. This strategy introduced by Huinker and Laughlin in 1996. It was originally made for mathematics learning in order to make students being able to solve mathematics problem and make a summary about it. Huinker and Laughlin (1996:82) stated that

“thinking and talking are important steps in the process of bringing meaning into the students’ writing.” They added that “Talking encourages the exploration of words and the testing of ideas. Talking promotes understanding.” When the teacher provides opportunities for the students to talk, their uncertainties about things that they unsure before will be decreased. Thus, the students will be able to make an understandable and meaningful product of writing. In short, “*Think-Talk-Write* strategy builds in time for thought and reflection and for the organization of ideas and the testing of those ideas before students are expected to write.” Laughlin (1996:82)

The reasons of choosing TTW strategy to be implemented in teaching writing foreign language are, first, the strategy match the writing process that suggested by an expert, second, creating a product of writing needs the students’ comprehension of the learning material in order to make the reader able to catch the meaning of the writing, and third, TTW strategy is not only beneficial to train the students’ ability in discovery learning, but also to gain their confidence to share their ideas, filter the information from the group discussion and develop their writing ability through the steps proposed in this strategy.

Below are the activities that represent the implementation of TTW strategy in teaching writing descriptive text. First, the teacher brings pictures about familiar animal to the students. Second, the teacher gives the pictures to the students randomly. Third, the students are instructed to make a descriptive text based on the picture that they got. Fourth, the students analyzed the picture and making some notes about the picture and things they do not know about (*think*). Fifth, the students are instructed to be in groups consists of three until six students, the teacher have to make sure that all of the groups consists of heterogeneous students. Sixth, the students deliver their ideas in the discussion. Each students has to share their ideas within their group member so that they could do the revision (*talk*). Seventh, each students construct the final product of writing by combining their ideas under the consideration of its generic structure and linguistic feature (*write*). Eighth, the teacher and the students review the material of the day and share what they still confuse about making descriptive text.

During the implementation of this strategy, the teacher has important roles in supporting the teaching and learning process. According to Silver and Smith in Yamin and Anshari (2008), the teacher should do the following activities: (1) Teacher has to stimulate the students with some questions and

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exercises that challenge the students to think. (2) Teacher needs to listen all of the students' ideas. (3) Teacher has to encourage students to share their ideas orally or in written form. (4) Teacher is definitely knows what kind of ability that students need to be promoted and tell the students to bring the equipment or stuff that needed during the the teaching and learning process beforehand. (5) Teacher has to be ready and knows when he gives the clarification, give the information or use the model to guide the students or let the students to find out the solution of their problem. (6) Teacher needs to monitor and evaluate the students' participation during discussion and encourage the students to take part in the discussion

Based on those explanations, the researcher decided to conduct a research about *Think-Talk-Write* strategy to be implemented in the teaching writing descriptive text to the seventh graders. Through the implementation of TTW strategy, the students are expected to have a better comprehension toward the learning material therefore they can produce meaningful writing product through the activities in TTW strategy.

Thus, the researcher formulates the research questions in order to find out what terms will be conducted. Those are, how is the implementation of "*Think-Talk-Write*" strategy to teach writing descriptive text to the seventh graders? And how is the students' response toward to the implementation of "*think-talk-write*" strategy to teach writing descriptive text to the seventh graders?

RESEARCH METHOD

The researcher employed descriptive qualitative study to describe the implementation of TTW strategy in teaching writing descriptive text to the seventh graders. According to McMillan (1996), descriptive study investigates and describes the existing phenomena. It shows the real condition happens when the research is being conducted. In this study, the researcher just sat on the back corner of the class while she is observing the teaching and learning process. The several points that the researcher observed were (1) the teaching and learning process using TTW strategy to teach writing descriptive text to the seventh graders; (2) the responses from the students toward the learning process using TTW strategy.

This study was conducted in SMPN 7 Surabaya. This school is located at Jalan Tanjung Sadari 17 Surabaya. There were nine classes for seventh graders; they are 7A until 7I. The researcher chose 7F as the subject of the study since most of the

students have same perspectives that English is difficult and uninteresting subject. It is because they have low motivation in learning English and they are not accustomed to write in English.

The researcher took two meetings to observe the implementation because seventh graders will face examination in the next week. Therefore, the researcher was permitted to use a week to make two observation.

To collect the data, the researcher used two instruments. The instruments were field notes and questionnaire. Field notes are used to describe the phenomena that is observed by the researcher. Ary et. al. (2010) stated that field notes contain everything that the researcher see. Field notes consist of two elements, descriptive part and reflective part. The descriptive part included a complete description of the setting, the people, and their reactions and their interpersonal relationship, and account of events whereas the reflective part included the observer's personal feelings or impressions about the events, comments on the problems, records of ethical issues, and speculations about data analysis. Field notes were taken during the learning process. Further, it used to answer the first research question.

Meanwhile, questionnaires are used to find out the students' responses toward the implementation of TTW strategy in teaching writing descriptive text. The questionnaires contained of questions dealing with the students' feelings toward English subject, students' opinion toward the strategy used by teacher to teach writing, the writing materials and the strategy used by the teacher to teach writing. The questionnaires prepared by the researcher were in kinds of multiple choices and written in Bahasa Indonesia. The questionnaires were distributed in the end of the implementation of TTW strategy. It purposed to answer the second research question.

After collecting the data using several instruments above, the researcher continued to analyze the data. First, the researcher analyzed the data obtained from the observation or in this case is in the form of field notes. The data are described based on its processes and presented in descriptive manner. The conversation during teaching-learning process is also attached to support the data. Moreover, the data from the questionnaire are analyzed by dividing number of comments of each item by the total number of students and then multiplied by a hundred percent. After that, it is explained descriptively or without using numbers.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The Implementation of *Think-Talk-Write* Strategy to teach Writing Descriptive Text

The implementation of TTW strategy were successfully conducted by the teacher in two meetings. The teacher did his role during the learning process. According to Gebhard (2000:37), the process of writing consist of four activities. The process are prewriting, drafting, revising and editing. TTW strategy is in line with the writing process. Therefore, the researcher would like to explain the result in order below.

In the prewriting stage, the students begin to generate their ideas toward the topic given. Seow (2002:317) stated that prewriting activities have big role in activating the students' ideas and collecting information for writing. From the results of the observation, the teacher did a good job in preparing the students to write. He did brainstorming activity during the first and second meeting. In the first meeting, he guided the students to make a descriptive text by showing them pictures and video and led them to point out the characteristic and linguistic features of descriptive text. The teacher did the activities suggested by Silver and Smith in Yamin and Anshari (2008) in which the teacher had to stimulate the students with some questions and exercises that challenged the students to think and the teacher needed to listen all of the students' ideas. Further, on the second meeting, the teacher gave feedback to the students' composition text. He discussed the students' errors and provided them with guidance to overcome it. The teacher did his roles to support the learning process based on the teacher's activities during TTW suggested by Silver and Smith in Yamin and Anshari (2008). By doing the prewriting activities such as brainstorming and also short review of students' common errors, the students were prepared to do the "*think*" stage and it made them being able to have a better comprehension in making descriptive text.

The next stage of writing process is drafting. Drafting is the result of thinking activity. "*Think*" stage in TTW was included in drafting stage because the activities of the students were to generate their ideas and put it into their raw composition text. The students were focused on the fluency and were not necessary to think thoroughly about their grammatical accuracy. The neatness of their writing also were not really needed in this stage. From the observation result, the students did the same activity as suggested by Smalley et al., (2001:8) that in the drafting stage, the writer might

not exceedingly concerned with the grammatical form but the writer should focus in finding the ideas to be put in the paper.

In the revising stage, the students began to analyze their works which they had already written on the first draft. They had to reread it to see how clear they communicated the meanings of their writing to the reader. Laughlin (1996:82) stated "Talking encourages the exploration of words and the testing of ideas. Talking promotes understanding." Stanley (1999:568) added that "talk is still important for generating, clarifying, sharing, and distributing ideas." TTW strategy, which was implemented, provided the help for the students to do the revision because it consist of "*talk*" stage. From the observation result, the students were put in heterogeneous group to communicate their ideas through "*talk*" stage. On the first meeting, just some of the students that actively discussed in the talk stage because some of them still had misconception and they were hesitant to discussed about it with their group members. However, in the next meeting, many of them were more active, confident, and comfortable rather than in the previous meeting in exchanging their ideas and asking their doubts since they were given the explanation of their error in the prewriting activity. Heterogeneous group is in line with the Johnson & Johnson's (1999: 18) suggestion explaining that when individuals are heterogeneous, cooperating on a task results in more realistic and positive views of each other. The students also shared their knowledge about descriptive text in kind of correcting and reminding each other. Seow in Richards and Renandya (2002: 318) argued that revising was not merely checking for language errors but also it was done to improve global content and the organization of ideas so that the writer's intent is made clearer to the reader.

The final stage of writing process was editing stage or "*write*" stage. In this stage, the students prepared their writing as the final product to be evaluated by the teacher. Editing took knowledge and experiences to become a good editor. In this stage, the students had to reread their work to find out some mistakes in their writing. Some mistakes might include some grammatically error of their writing such as the spelling, punctuation, dictation, sentence structure, and any other components of writing. From the observation results, the students were concentrated and looked serious in creating their final composition. They also often took a look at their notes from the "*talk*" stage and the example of descriptive text in the prewriting activity. Students did their best in editing, seeing that editing was meaningful for them in order to make their writing clearer and

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unambiguous. Therefore, they could make the readers to be able to get the meanings of their writing. However, on the first meeting, many students still had misconception toward descriptive text which made their composition less meaningful but in the next meeting, they became aware of their error and showed progress in creating descriptive text.

By using this strategy to teach writing, the students got opportunities to build their thinking ability and learn to discover the information from many sources. The brainstorming activity which included in prewriting activity was important for the students to begin writing by generating ideas and making drafts. "Think" stage was useful for the students to train their thinking ability in generating ideas because a good writer basically from a good thinker. "Talk" stage was also great for the students to test their ideas, deepen their descriptive text knowledge, increase their confidence and develop the interpersonal relationship among them. This stage also provided an opportunity for the students to do the revision. Meanwhile, "write" stage trained the students to apply their ideas using the knowledge of descriptive text and edit their writing into a meaningful composition text. According to Hidi and Boscolo in *Handbook of Writing Research*, "a novice writer takes advantage by using a strategy until he or she is able to master it: His or her objective-and that of his or her teacher- is to learn a process well (process goal)." In conclusion, the implementation of TTW strategy was effective to teach writing particularly descriptive text because it assisted the students in learning and composing descriptive text.

The Students' Responses toward the Implementation of Think-Talk-Write Strategy to teach Writing Descriptive Text

The researcher collected the data of students' responses through questionnaires. It was purposed to gain responses from the students toward the implementation of TTW strategy to teach writing descriptive text. The questionnaire was in form of multiple choices and contained of 10 questions constructed based on four indicators. The first indicator was about English subject. The second indicator of the questionnaires was about students' interest in writing skill particularly descriptive text. The third indicator was about the material used to teach descriptive text. The fourth indicator was about the implementation of TTW strategy to teach writing descriptive text.

According to the first and second indicator, the students' interest in English was quite low.

However, they agreed that English was important to be mastered. Further, most of them agreed that it was essential for them to master writing skill particularly writing descriptive text. Seeing that mastering writing skill was important for the students, the teacher had to consider appropriate strategy, methods or games that encouraged the students' motivation to learn and practice their skill in writing composition text in English.

Based on the third and fourth indicator, the students felt that the topic was interesting but rather difficult for them. Furthermore, based on the fourth indicator, the implementation of TTW strategy was categorized as successful. The students' responses showed that the students understood their job during the learning of descriptive text using TTW strategy. Moreover, they agreed that TTW strategy was helpful for them and increased their motivation in learning writing of descriptive text. In short, TTW strategy was well implemented and the seventh graders were interested, motivated and helped to learn writing descriptive text.

CONCLUSION

Think-Talk-Write (TTW) strategy was successfully applied and showed a good result to assist teaching writing descriptive text to the seventh graders of SMPN 7 Surabaya. The stages in TTW were done according to the process of writing suggested by Gebhard (2000). Although on the first meeting, a problem appeared during the "talk" activity, the teacher could handle with the situation well. He also followed the experts' suggestion that was stated by Silver and Smith in Anshari during the implementation of TTW by doing his role. By using this strategy, the students had the opportunities to develop, exchange, testing, and editing their ideas through the activity proposed in the implementation of TTW strategy. Further, the students showed good responses toward the implementation of *Think-Talk-Write* strategy. Most of the students liked the implementation of TTW strategy. They showed good attitudes toward the learning process.

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