

ROUNDTABLE BRAINSTORMING: A TECHNIQUE TO IMPROVE THE WRITING ABILITY OF STUDENTS IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXTS

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Abstrak

Menulis merupakan suatu keterampilan berbahasa yang memiliki fungsi yang sangat penting untuk pembelajar bahasa. Pada kenyataannya, kebanyakan siswa kesulitan dan mudah bosan dalam menulis. Karena itu, siswa sering mendapatkan nilai yang rendah. Untuk meningkatkan kemampuan menulis siswa, guru – guru bahasa Inggris seharusnya menerapkan teknik yang efektif. Roundtable brainstorming adalah salah satu teknik yang dapat digunakan dalam kegiatan belajar mengajar untuk menulis. Teknik ini diyakini mampu untuk meningkatkan kemampuan menulis siswa khususnya dalam menulis teks deskriptif. Berhubungan dengan hal di atas, penulis tertarik untuk mengadakan penelitian mengenai penggunaan roundtable brainstorming untuk meningkatkan kemampuan menulis siswa kelas sepuluh SMAN 12 Surabaya dalam menulis teks deskriptif. Penelitian ini diadakan untuk membuktikan apakah roundtable brainstorming dapat meningkatkan kemampuan menulis siswa kelas sepuluh SMAN 12 Surabaya dalam menulis teks deskriptif. Penulis menggunakan metode penelitian eksperimen dalam mengerjakan penelitiannya. Siswa kelas sepuluh SMAN 12 Surabaya merupakan subjek penelitian. Instrumen yang digunakan untuk penelitian ini adalah tes menulis. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa roundtable brainstorming dapat meningkatkan kemampuan menulis siswa kelas sepuluh SMAN 12 Surabaya dalam menulis teks deskriptif. Teknik tersebut dapat meningkatkan semua komponen menulis kecuali “mechanics”.

Kata Kunci: Menulis, teks deskriptif, brainstorming, roundtable brainstorming.

Abstract

Writing is considered as one of the language skills which has very important role for language learners. In fact, the most of students get difficulty and easily get bored in writing. Because of that, the students often get the low score. To improve the writing ability of students, the English teachers have to apply the effective technique. Roundtable Brainstorming is one of technique that can be used in teaching learning to write. It is expected to be able to improve the writing ability of the students especially in writing descriptive texts. Related to the above matters, the writer was interested to conduct the research about using roundtable brainstorming to improve the writing ability of ten grade students of SMAN 12 Surabaya in writing descriptive texts. This study is conducted to prove whether roundtable brainstorming can improve the writing ability of grade ten students of SMAN 12 Surabaya in writing descriptive texts. The writer used experimental research in doing her study. The grade ten students of SMAN 12 Surabaya were the subject of the study. The instrument used for this research was writing test. The results of the study show that roundtable brainstorming can improve the writing ability of grade ten students of SMAN 12 Surabaya in Writing Descriptive Texts. It can improve all the components of the students' composition except “mechanics”.

Keywords: Writing, descriptive texts, brainstorming, roundtable brainstorming.

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, English is learned by students of every school's levels. English as an international language is a language that should be learned by the society. Based on Chi-Kim Cheung (2001: 59), teachers should choose and present the appropriate way which can allow the students

to interact with one another in order to exchange information, attitudes, and feelings.

Writing is one of the four skills in English that students should have in learning English. Brown (2001: 339) states that in school, writing is like the way of life because it has the important function. It is needed for passing the course and mastering the subject matter.

Therefore, the English teachers should consider to the way of them in teaching writing. They have to guide their students in learning to write, so the students can success in writing. The success of writing can be seen from the students' writing score. In order to improve the writing score of the students, teachers should apply the effective way to teach them. There is a fact based on the researcher's experience that the teachers asked the students to write something without giving enough preparation before. They just explained the general information about the text which they should write, and then the students began to write. As the result of that teaching method, the students confused about what they should write because they have less idea in their mind.

Based on some researches which she had done, Silva (1993: 657) found that the writer who did less planning, they were less fluent (used fewer words), less accurate (made more errors) and less effective in stating the goal and organizing the material. Differences in using appropriate grammatical, rhetorical conventions and lexical variety were also found among other features. It means that if the writers do less planning before writing, they will get low score almost in all writing aspects which are content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics.

In order to get some ideas before writing, the students should do the planning (pre-writing) process. There are some techniques in planning (pre-writing) stage. One of them is brainstorming which is the act of spontaneously jotting down ideas in preparation for various aspects of writing (Ledbetter, 2009: 18). Brainstorming can be applied through cooperative learning method. It is the way that allows the students to work in a group. By doing that, it not only gives positive effects on achieving the goal, but also on students' psychology while studying.

Descriptive texts are texts which give statements of what somebody or something is like. There is a fact here, that the students often fell confused in writing descriptive texts. One of the reasons is they actually do not know somebody or something which they should describe. There is another reason which is even they know somebody or something which they should describe, they still confused about what should they write first, second, third, and so on. Based on the explanation above the researcher conducted the research which entitled "Using Roundtable Brainstorming to Improve the Writing Ability of Grade Ten Students of SMAN 12 Surabaya in Writing Descriptive Texts".

The research question of the study is "Is there any significant difference in the writing ability between students who are taught using roundtable brainstorming and those who are not in writing descriptive texts?" Therefore, the aim of the research is to find out whether

there is a significant difference in the writing ability or not between students who are taught using roundtable brainstorming and those who are not in writing descriptive texts. Based on the research question above, the two hypotheses are stated. The null hypothesis states that there is no significant different on the writing ability of the students after given the treatment. While, the alternative hypothesis states that there is a significant difference on the writing ability after given the treatment. Here, the researcher also looked at the computation result of each component of the students' composition in order to know in which component students are still weak.

Communication is divided into two forms; they are spoken and written form. Writing includes in a communication of written form. Written English is different from spoken English. Silva (2002: 252) claimed that writing as a clear explanation of as clear as the process of explaining, sociolinguistic, strategic, and grammatical competence where the use of correct spelling as the mediator between them. Writing is a kind of English skills, so the more the students practice it, the higher their ability of it. Olson stressed that sometimes the writing process stages do not occur in a nicely, neatly and orderly fashion even the writer may describe it in logical. Therefore, writing often stated as complicated skill and "writing is indeed, one of the most complex intellectual and emotional processes of a writer. It draws from the left and right hemispheres of the brain", (1996: 13). Those are some views of writing from some experts. According to some views above, it can be concluded that writing is a skill of delivering the ideas to the readers in the form of letters, essays, stories or research reports by processing those ideas start from generating the ideas, organizing them and ending in rereading a writing product.

According to Peha (1996), the writers should consider these components:

- a. Language Use
The sentences that are written should correct and appropriate.
- b. Mechanics
Mechanics include conventions. Conventions are the way in terms of using punctuation, spelling, grammar and other things that make writing consistent and easy to read.
- c. Content
The ideas that included in the content should be thought creatively.
- d. Organization
The way the writer moves from one idea to the next should run in logical order.
- e. Vocabularies

Choosing the appropriate vocabularies in composing a piece of writing can enhance the effectiveness of language.

There are some approaches in teaching writing such as controlled composition approach and the paragraph pattern approach. Besides, there is a process approach in teaching writing which serves some stages that the students should do during the writing process. Those stages include planning (pre-writing), whilst writing and post-writing. In order to get some ideas before writing, the students should do the planning (pre-writing) process.

There are some techniques in planning (pre-writing) stage. One of them is brainstorming. Brainstorming can be applied through cooperative learning method. Based on Kagan (2004: 3), one of the techniques in cooperative learning which can be applied to the process of planning is roundtable brainstorming. It also can be applied in whilst writing stage. Based on Hollie (2011: 162), the students make a group and each group sits around the table. Then they will be given a single sheet by their teacher. That single sheet contains a single question related to the topic of writing. Every member in a group should share their ideas by writing them on that sheet. After that, they deliver to the person next to him. The next person should write their ideas too. This activity will end if all members in a group have shared their ideas. Those ideas will help the students arrange the text. By collecting the ideas in a group, the students will not get confused about what they should write because they already have some ideas as the references to write. They also can prepare to make it in a good organization. Roundtable brainstorming will help the teachers to improve the writing score of the students.

METHOD

The research design of this study was an experimental research. The aim of this research is to prove whether roundtable brainstorming can improve the writing ability of tenth graders in writing descriptive texts. Here, the researcher also looked at the computation result of each component of the students' composition in order to know in which component students are still weak. Ary et al (2010:265) stated that an experimental research has a purpose to determine whether there is a causal relationship between two or more variables or not. In this experimental study, the implementation of roundtable brainstorming was given as a treatment to the students and the students' writing performance was measured. Thus, the researcher used two groups of pretest-posttest design. Firstly, the pretest was conducted on both groups before the treatment was given. Then the posttest was done after applying the treatment to the experimental group.

The population of this study is students of SMAN 12 Surabaya. All of the population was in grade ten, whose level of English proficiency was supposed to be the same. They are permanently arranged in 9 classes by SMAN 12 Surabaya, so the researcher used cluster random sampling technique to choose one class as the experimental group and the other one as the control group. By using cluster random sampling, X-4 and X-6 were chosen as the samples among those classes. X-4 was drawn as the experimental group and X-6 as the control group. X-4 as the experimental group consists of 32 students and X-6 as the control group also consists of 32 students.

In order to answer the research questions of this study, some data are needed to be analyzed by the researcher. There are two kinds of data needed by the researcher. Those are pre-test score and post-test score. Pre and post-test score were gotten by analyzing the students' writing work. Students were given the writing test in the form of essay. Before the researcher gave the pre-test and post-test to the control and the experimental groups, the researcher ensured the validity of the study by matching the test item with the curriculum. Then, for ensuring the reliability of those tests, the researcher conducted the try out in class X – 6 which consists of 35 students. Here, the students' work was analyzed by two people in order to find whether the score of the students' work which given by two people are similar or not. The correctors are the researcher and the English teacher of grade ten. For the results, it can be concluded that that writing test is valid and reliable. Actually, the pre-test and the post-test are same. They are the same in format, instruction, length, level of difficulty, and allotted time. The writing topics between the two tests are the same, too. For this reason, the researcher assumes that the participants would have no trouble.

The researcher used the same analytic marking scale to score the pre-test and the post-test. It was adapted from English Composition Program Testing ESL Composition because it provides more useful diagnostic information about students' writing abilities. The ESL composition profile for evaluation consists of five aspects: *content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics*.

The writing test of descriptive texts was applied in the pretest, treatment, and posttest. They are included into:

- 1) The pre-test
The students took the pre-test before they got the treatment. It was done in 45 minutes.
- 2) The treatment
The researcher gave the treatment in three meetings to the experimental group after they got the pretest.
- 3) The post-test
The post-test was exactly the same as the pretest. The post-test was done within 45 minutes. It gave to the

students after the experimental group got the treatment.

Based on Ary et al (2010), the treatment is given only to the experimental group after which the two groups are measured on the dependent variable by giving them the pre-test. After that, the researcher compared the two groups' scores on the posttest. To score the data, the researcher used t-test which is adopted from Bartz (1976). The result of t-test was compared with t-table in the level of significance of 5% and 62 degree of freedom. If the value of t-test was lower than the t-table ($p < 0.05$), it means that there is no significant difference in the writing ability between students who are taught using roundtable brainstorming and those who are not in writing descriptive texts. If the value of t-test was higher than the t-table ($p > 0.05$), it means that there is a significant difference in the writing ability between students who are taught using roundtable brainstorming and those who are not in writing descriptive texts.

To know in which component students are still weak, the researcher also used matched pair. It means that firstly, the researcher constructed the pre-test scores of the experimental and control groups for each component carefully to make sure they were equal. Next, the researcher constructed the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups for each component carefully to find the score improvement of each component for both groups. The result of the data was also taken from t-test formula analysis. The result of t-test was compared with t-table in the level of significance of 5% and 62 degree of freedom.

FINDINGS

In this study, the researcher used matched pairs which mean that the researcher constructed the pre-test scores of the experimental and control groups carefully to make sure they were equal. Then, the researcher constructed the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups carefully to find the score improvement of both groups. The result of the data was taken from t-test formula analysis.

1. The Result of Pre-Test Score

Table 1: The Pre-Test Scores of Experimental and Control Groups

Group	Score	N	Mean	t-value	t-table
Experimental	2171	32	67.8	.72	1.999
Control	2091	32	65.3		

From the table above, the result shows that $p < .05$. The t-value which is .72 is lower than t-table which is 1.999. So, it can be proved that there is no significant difference on the students' ability of both groups before the treatment was given.

2. The Result of Post-Test Score

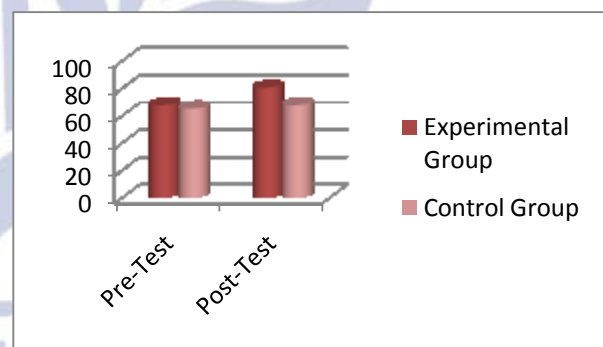
Table 2: The Post-Test Scores of Experimental and Control Groups

Group	Score	N	Mean	t-value	t-table
Experimental	2577	32	80.5	5.49	1.999
Control	2165	32	67.7		

From the table above, the result shows that the t-value is 5.49 and t-table is 1.999. It means that $p > .05$. So, it can be proved that there is a difference on the students' ability of both groups after the treatment was given.

Below was showed the mean improvement of both groups in the pre-test and post-test. It was showed through chart to give a clear report.

Chart 1: The Mean Improvement of the Experimental and Control Groups



Based on the chart that showed above, it can be seen that the means of the experimental and control group in the pre-test are quite same. While in the post-test, it can be seen that the mean of the experimental group is higher than the mean of the control group. Therefore, it can be said that roundtable brainstorming can give the significant improvement of the mean of the experimental group.

From the result that has been showed above, the researcher found that the ability of the tenth graders in writing descriptive texts is equal before they got the treatment. The researcher got that result by comparing the pre-test score of the experimental and control groups. It is showed by the t-value which is .72, while the t-table is 1.999. It can be concluded that $p < .05$. It means that

there is no significant difference between the experimental and control groups in the ability of writing descriptive texts.

By comparing the post-test score of experimental and control groups, the researcher found that there is a significant difference in the writing ability between students who are taught using roundtable brainstorming and those who are not in writing descriptive texts. That result was concluded based on the t-value which is higher than t-table ($p > .05$). The t-value is 5.49, while the t-table is 1.999.

Before comparing the post-test score of each component of the students' composition, the researcher firstly looked at the computation of those pre-test score to make sure that they are equal. The result shows that the t-value is lower than t-table which is 1.999. The t-value of the content is .6, .89 for organization, .61 for vocabularies, -.35 for language use and 1.18 for mechanics. From that result, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in each component of the students' composition between students who are taught using roundtable brainstorming and those who are not in writing descriptive texts before they got the treatment. It means that they are equal.

After comparing the post-test score of each component of the students' composition, the researcher found that the students are still weak in mechanics but not in others components like content, organization, vocabularies, and language use. It means that the students were still confused about paragraphing, how to spell the words, and how to use punctuation and capitalization even after they got the treatment.

Table 3: The Post-Test Scores of Both Groups in Terms of "Mechanics"

Calculation	Experimental	Control
	Post-test	Post-test
N	32	32
Scores	105	101
Means	3.28	3.15
t-test	1.3	
t-table	1.999	

From the table above, the result shows that the t-test is 1.3 and t-table is 1.999. It means that $p < .05$. So, it can be proved that there is no significant difference on the students' composition in terms of "mechanics" of both groups after the treatment was given. While, the t-value of the others component are higher than t-table ($p > .05$). The t-value of the content is 3.32, 4.42 for organization, 3.75 for vocabularies and 3.32 for language use.

Based on the results above, the researcher found that roundtable brainstorming can improve the writing ability of tenth graders in writing descriptive texts. It can improve the writing ability of tenth graders in writing descriptive texts in terms of all components of students' composition except "mechanics". It can be concluded that the null hypothesis is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

There are three conclusions obtained from the result of the study. They are described as follows:

1. There is a significant difference in the writing ability between students who are taught using roundtable brainstorming and those who are not in writing descriptive texts.
2. There is a significant difference in the writing ability in terms of "content", "organization", "vocabularies", and "language use" between students who are taught using roundtable brainstorming and those who are not in writing descriptive texts.
3. There is no difference in the writing ability in terms of "mechanics" between students who are taught using roundtable brainstorming and those who are not in writing descriptive texts.

Suggestion

Based on the data interpretation and previous conclusion, the researcher has some suggestions for the next researchers and the English teachers and also commonly to the readers. The researcher constructs her suggestions as follows:

1. The English teachers have to be creative in the teaching learning process especially in teaching writing. It means that the teachers should give the students interesting materials so that it can avoid the students' boredom and make them enthusiastic in learning to write.
2. The English teachers should use the cooperative learning in the writing activity, so that the students can improve their writing skills by sharing their ideas to others.
3. The English teachers should give the simple game that can improve the writing component of the students' composition in terms of "mechanics" as warming up activity or play that game at the middle of activity while implementing roundtable brainstorming in writing class.
4. Because of roundtable brainstorming can not improve the writing component of the students' composition in

terms of “mechanics”, the researcher would like to invite other researchers to conduct a research about techniques or strategies which can improve that writing component of the students’ composition in writing descriptive texts.

5. The researcher would like to invite other researchers who conduct similar studies to make some improvement in their study such as the using same technique but for different levels of students.

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