

THE INFLUENCE OF GROUP TASK TOWARDS STUDENTS' WRITING ABILITY IN NARRATIVE TEXT

Purna Wiratno
STKIP PGRI Bandar Lampung
purnawiratno@gmail.com

Abstract: *Language is a very important thing for human around the world because language is used in all aspects of human life. People use language to communicate with each other and to get knowledge. The objective of this research is to find out the influence of using group task as a technique in teaching writing ability at SMP level. The writer conducted the research at the first semester of the eighth class of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Way Sulan South Lampung in 2017/2018. There were two classes namely class VIIIA for experimental class and class VIIIB for control class. As the sample consists of 59 students. The sample was taken by using total random sampling technique. After analyzing the data by using t-test formula, it was found that $t_{test} > t_{table} = 7.11 > 2.00$. It means that there was positive influence of group task towards students' writing narrative text ability at the first semester of the eighth class at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Way Sulan South Lampung in 2017/2018.*

Keywords: *Group Task, Writing, narrative text*

INTRODUCTION

In education of Indonesia, English has been used as the first foreign language and learnt from elementary school until the first or the second semester of university, except for those from English Department of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education and Faculty of English Literature.

Four skills of English are writing, listening, speaking and reading. They have same important thing in communication. Writing is important because in writing we can express our mind as well as possible.

The other factor is the students do not systematically practice in writing. It is started from the simple one and the specific one to the complex one. And they are forced to write as well as possible. Writing is an integral and necessary skill when learning a second language as communication is not only done orally. Writing is necessary if a person is looking

to study or work in a particular country. Writing also results in increased practice using the language. Connections can be made between the four key skills in learning a language: reading, writing, listening and speaking. These skills do not exist independently, they are interrelated; improving one will result in improvements in the others. Writing is a manner for students to practice their language skills in a way that promotes noticing; as they write their texts, they are forced to notice certain grammar and vocabulary structures and reflect on why those are used and not others.

Harmer (1998:79) states by far the most important reason for teaching writing, of course, is that it is a basic language skill, just as important as speaking, listening and reading. Student needs to know how to reply to write letters, how to put written reports together, how to reply to advertisement –

and increasingly, how to write using electronic.

It means that writing is important subject for the students and they have to study more to be able express what they want to write and how to write.

In writing process, students should have interesting idea in their mind. Then, one important thing to do is to make a plan what they want to say and think more about the topic before they start to write in relation to write in indeed a thinking process (Brown, 2001:3).

Based on pre liminary research at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Way Sulan South Lampung the writer found that the students' ability in writing narrative text needs to be increased. They found difficulties in expressing an idea in writing. The students are not able to do writing because lack exercises in writing and possibly the teacher is hardly able to find the proper way or technique in teaching writing. It is stated that in every teaching learning activity, teaching technique plays an important role; without appropriate technique the result of the teaching will be far from satisfactory.

Based on the background of problem above, the writer is interested to increase in students' writing ability by applying group task in teaching writing. Therefore the writer proposes a research the title "The Influence of Group Task toward the Students' Writing Narrative Text at the First Semester of the Eighth Class at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Way Sulan South Lampung"

THEORIES

Learning to write is an important goal. Both children and adults, the ability to write enables to express their ideas in writing.

Byrne (1995:5) states that writing, on the other hand, is learned through a process of instruction: we have to master the written form of the language and to learn certain structures which are less used in speech, or perhaps not used at all,

but which are important for effective communication in writing. It means that writing mastery is very important for us although its less used in speech but to make the effective of our communication we must understand in learning writing process.

Byrne (1995:7) states that writing is often needed for formal and informal testing. Although in general oral ability should be measured through oral tests, in practice we are often obliged by circumstances, such as the amount of time we have at our disposal and the number of students there are in the class, to use some form of written test.

Based on statements above, writing is important to test them for formal or informal. We can devide the time of students to use some form in testing writing in the class. Harmer (1998:79) states that the reason for teaching writing to students of English as a foreign language include reinforcement, language development learning style and, most importantly writing as a skill in its own right. Writing is the most important in learning process of foreign language to increase the ability of students.

Writing is one of language skills that are taught at school and university. It is stated by Harmer (2004:31) writing (as one of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing) has always formed part of the syllabus in the teaching of English. According to Harmer (2004:33) writing is used to help the students performing a different kind of activity (in this case speaking and learning). It means by using writing it also can help the students to perform by using different kind of activity such as speaking and learning.

Tribble (1996:3) states that "writing is a language skill which is difficult to acquire". All of the students of school or college suppose writing is so difficult to learn. It is so difficult why? Because in writing we must master language component like vocabulary and grammar.

Writing is the method to represent language in visual or tactile form. Writing uses sets symbols to represent the sound of speech, and also have symbol for such things as punctuation and numerals.

We can express our idea, feeling and thought through written form. Writing also can help the students to learn. It is also supported by Ann Raimes (1983:3) writing helps our students learn. How? First, writing reinforces the grammatical structures, idioms, and vocabulary that we have been teaching our students. Second, when the students write, they also have a chance to be adventurous with the language, to go beyond what they have just learned to say, to take risk. Third, when they write they become very involved with the new language, the effort to express ideas and the consonant use of eye, hand, and brain is a unique way to reinforce learning.

Brown (2001:335) states that written product are often the result of thinking, drafting, and revising procedures that require specialized skills, skill that not every speaker develops naturally.

Anderson and Anderson (1997:8) states that a narrative is a piece of text which tells a story and, in doing so, entertains or informs the reader or listener. The narrative text of short story is telling a story or an account of a sequence of events. One of the four traditional forms of composition (along with description, exposition, persuasion). Narration differs from exposition, which can also relate a sequence of events, in that narration needs not be factual and may be written from the perspective of a character in the text.

The generic structure of a narrative text:

- 1) Orientation : Sets the scene and introduces the participants.
- 2) Complication : A crisis arises
- 3) Resolution : The crisis is resolved, for the better or for worse.

4) Re-orientation : Optional

According to Malyno (2012), the grammatical feature of narrative text is as follows: 1) use specific nouns such as the name of person, place and building etc; 2) use adjectives which form noun phrases; 3) use time connectives and conjunctions such as then, before that, soon; 4) use adverbs and adverbial phrases; 5) use action verbs; and 6) use saying words such as states, told, promised.

The purpose of learning to write is to increase the ability of students in writing. Learning to write is a process where the students learn to use grammar and facts as tool in carrying out a particular purpose.

Usually, the teachers are confronted with the question of how they are going to reach their student to do it. The process must proceed by stages from simple to complex, because the student can not expect to learn all about writing in a short time or at once. Uses conventional system to convey the meaning to the reader is a process of communication in writing.

Finochiaro (1997:30) states that in small steps, the teacher should teach the students: 1) The sound spelling correspondences; 2) The mechanics of writing (punctuation, capitalization, and spelling); 3) Letter writing, formal and informal (greeting, ending, and others mechanics); 4) Practical, functional writing needed for note taking, outlining and summarizing; 5) The organizations and expression of an idea which will convey its desired meaning and permit the reader to understand the messages; and 6) The differences between speaking and writing, between informal and a formal styles of writing and between modes and discourse.

It must have implications not only for the way in which we teach people to become better writer in a foreign language but also for the way people write in their first language. Because we have seen that writing in a particular genre tends to lead

to the use certain kinds of text construction.

From learning how to use cohesive devices effectively and from being prompted to give a significant amount of attention to coherent organization within genre, students will also benefit greatly. Harmer (2004:28) adds that writing within genres in the language classroom implies, therefore, a significant attention to reading.

Based on explanation above, we can take the conclusion that the student must keep their purpose in mind, think about the facts they will need to decide which are relevant to purpose and think about how to organize those facts in a coherent fashion when students are doing writing.

The processes of learning writing are: the teacher give an assignment, the students write, and composition is controlled. Based on statements above, writer takes the conclusion that the students have to exercise themselves to practice their writing in order to become accustomed to write correct composition and in practicing their writing they have to follow the procedure on the steps to make their writing more effective. Feedback or correction is the important things in the procedure of writing.

Feedback must be received by students on their writing as soon as possible. In writing learning process, the students need a motivation. Motivation is very important because it is an absolute condition for teaching learning process. The students are lazy and not interested in writing, it is often found by us. With this condition, it means that the teacher is not success in giving motivation for them in writing.

Doing something by Group is the way easier to get maximally. Group task is the work of small group of many subjects in learning process which the students try to discuss about something or subject was being done by them. The useful way to classified group task activities is to look at the distribution of

the information needed to do activity. The activity is based on the teacher's task. At the same time the students accept their responsibility for learning and the teacher can delegate part of his responsibility to his students as an instructor.

Harmin (2006:242) states that instructing small group to work at a task and, while working, practices an interpersonal skills. This strategy is a most powerful form of cooperative learning. It advances not only academic learning but also effective interpersonal skills.

The group's task is to get the job done. People who are concerned with the task tend to make suggestion as to the best way to proceed or deal with a problem; attempt to summarize what has been covered or what has been going on in group; give or ask for facts, ideas, opinion, feelings, feedback, or search for alternatives and keep the group on target; prevent going off on tangents.

Based on the explanation above, the writer considers that group task is the easier way for the students' learning process in studying English. In group we can discuss about our difficulties to search alternatives or to find the way in facing difficulties of study. The students will be easy to give or ask their opinion or ideas.

Charles and Richard (1975:1) said that when decision-makers in public and privat institutions in this society are faced with genuinely important task, it is likely that they will assign those task to group for solution. A group as a unit composed of two or more persons who come into contact for a purpose and how considered the contact meaningful (While Mill, 1976:2).

Related to the opinion above, it can be concluded that group task is solution to finish the difficulties of the students' task. The students are able to make a group with two or more persons of their groups. Harmer (2007:171) states that our role in group task does not end when we have decided which students should work

together, of course. We have other matter to address, too, not only before the activity start, but also during and after it.

- Before: when we want students to work together in pair or group, we will want to follow an ‘engage-instruct-initiate’ sequence. This is because the students need to feel enthusiastic about what they are going to do, they need to know what they are going to do, and they need to be given a idea of when they will have finished the task.
- During: while students are working in pair or groups we have a number of options. We could, for instance, stand at the front or the side of the class (or at the back or anywhere else) and keep an eye on what is happening, nothing who appears to be stuck, disengaged or about to finish. In this position we can tune in to a particular pair or group from some distance away. We can then decide whether to go over and help them.
- After: when pair or groups stop working together, we need to organize feedback. We want to let them discuss what occurred during Group Task session and, where necessary, add our own assessment and make corrections.

METHODS

In conducting the research used experimental method to know the influence of Group Task towards students’ writing ability in Narrative text at eighth class of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Way Sulan in 2017/2018. It consists of two classes that is experiment class and control class. The research used Group Task technique in the experiment class and used the conventional technique in control class.

The population of the research was the students at the eighth class of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Way Sulam in 2017/2018 consisting of 59 students in 2

classes. The sample of the research were two classes, the first class was VIII A consisted of 29 students as the experimental class and the second class was VIII B consisted of 30 as the control class. In the experimental class was the students were taught by Group Task and in control class the students were taught by using the conventional technique. In conducting the research, the writer used Total Sampling technique to establish the experiment class and the control class, because all students were the sample is homogeneous.

To know students’ ability in writing narrative text, the writer uses writing test. The writer asked students to make narrative text based on the topics given. In scoring students writing ability the writer used the scoring system proposed by Heaton (1989:146), which score in writing test, there are:

- 1) Content
- 2) Organization
- 3) Vocabulary
- 4) Grammar
- 5) Mechanic

Therefore, the writer used it to score the students’ writing test.

The score system of student s’ writing test:

Content

30-27 Excellent to very good: knowledge, substantive

26-22 Good to Average: same knowledge of subject, adequate

21-17 Fair to poor: limited knowledge of subject, little substance

16-13 Very poor: does not show knowledge of subject, non- substantive

Organization

20-18 Excellent to very good: fluent expression, ideas clearly stated

17-14 Good to average: somewhat choppy, loosely organized but main ideas stand out

13-10 Fair to poor: non-fluent, ideas confused or disconnected

9-7 Very poor: does not communicate, organization

Vocabulary

20-18 Excellent to very good: sophisticated, effective word/idiom choice, usage

17-14 Good to average: asexual range, occasional errors of word/idiom from choice, usage but meaning not obscure

13-10 Fair to poor: limited range frequent errors or word/idiom form. Choice, usage.

9-7 Very poor: essentially translation, little knowledge of English vocabulary

Grammar

25-22 Excellent to very good: effective complex construction

21-29 Good to average: effective but simple construction

18-11 Fair to poor: problem in simple/complex construction

10-5 Very poor: essentially translation, little knowledge of English vocabulary

Mechanics

5 Excellent to very good: demonstrates mastery of convention

4 Good to average: occasional errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalize

3 Fair to poor: frequent errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization

2 Very poor: no mastery of convention-dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization and paragraphing.

The writer analyzed the data to know the result of the research. In the analyzing the data, the writer used quantitative analysis to know the influence of Group Task towards students' writing ability in Narrative text. The formula that was used is t-test.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Research Finding

In the hypothesis test, there were equality test of two averages and difference test of two averages. It was used to prove the hypothesis proposed by the writer they are accepted or not by using t-test formula. The formula of t-test is as follow:

$$t_{test} = \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2}{s \sqrt{\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2}}}$$

In which:

$$s^2 = \frac{(n_1 - 1)S_1^2 + (n_2 - 1)S_2^2}{n_1 + n_2 - 2}$$

Notes:

n_1 : total number of students experimental class.

n_2 : total number of students control class.

\bar{x}_1 : the average score of experimental class.

\bar{x}_2 : the average score of control class.

S_1^2 : the variance of experimental class.

S_2^2 : the variance of control class.

From the table above, it was obtained:

n_1	: 29
n_2	: 30
\bar{x}_1	: 72.12
\bar{x}_2	: 56
S_1^2	: 103.89
S_2^2	: 75.27

Then the data is included into the following t-test formula:

$$t_{test} = \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2}{s \sqrt{\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2}}}$$

With:

$$s^2 = \frac{(n_1 - 1)S_1^2 + (n_2 - 1)S_2^2}{n_1 + n_2 - 2}$$

$$s^2 = \frac{(29 - 1)103.89 + (30 - 1)75.27}{29 + 30 - 2}$$

$$s^2 = \frac{2908.92 + 2182.83}{57}$$

$$s^2 = \frac{5091.75}{57}$$

$$s^2 = 89.72$$

$$s = \sqrt{89.72}$$

$$s = 9.45$$

After standard of deviation was found, the writer calculated them into t-test as follow:

$$t_{test} = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}{\sqrt{s^2 \left(\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2} \right)}}$$

$$t = \frac{72.12 - 56}{9.45 \sqrt{\frac{1}{29} + \frac{1}{30}}}$$

$$t = \frac{16.12}{9.45 \sqrt{0.03 + 0.03}}$$

$$t = \frac{16.12}{9.45 \sqrt{0.06}}$$

$$t = \frac{16.12}{2.268}$$

$$t = 7.11$$

The hypotheses are:
 Ho 1: $\mu_1 = \mu_2$ (There is no influence of using group task towards students narrative writing ability at the first semester of the eighth class at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Way Sulan in 2017/2018)
 Ha1: $\mu_1 \neq \mu_2$ (There is influence of group task towards students narrative writing ability at the first semester of the eighth class at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Way Sulan in 2017/2018)

The testing criterion :

Ho is rejected if t_{ratio} or $t_{test} > t_{table} (1 - \frac{1}{2} \alpha)$
 $T_{table} = t (1 - \frac{1}{2} \alpha) (df)$, where $df = (n_1 + n_2 - 2)$
 For the significant level $\alpha = 0.05$, it is obtained :
 $t_{table} = t (1 - \frac{1}{2} \alpha) (df)$
 $= t (1 - \frac{1}{2} 0.05) (29 + 30 - 2)$
 $= t (0.975) (57)$
 $= 2.00$
 For the significant level $\alpha = 0.01$, it is obtained :
 $t_{table} = t (1 - \frac{1}{2} \alpha) (df)$

$$= t (1 - \frac{1}{2} 0.01) (29 + 30 - 2)$$

$$= t (0.995) (57)$$

$$= 2.66$$

Based on the data analysis, it was got t_{ratio} or $t_{test} = 7.11$ and $t_{table} = 0.975 (75) = 2.00$ and $t_{table} = 0.995 (75) = 2.66$. It means that $t_{test} > t_{table}$. So the writer could conclude that there is positive influence of using group task towards students narrative writing ability at the first semester of the eighth class at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Way Sulan in 2017/2018.

Difference Test of Two Averages

The hypotheses are:
 Ho 1: $\mu_1 \leq \mu_2$ (The average score of students narrative writing ability taught by using group task is lower at the first semester of the eighth class at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Way Sulan in 2017/2018).
 Ha 1: $\mu_1 \geq \mu_2$ (The average score of students narrative writing ability taught by using group task is higher at the first semester of the eighth class at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Way Sulan in 2017/2018).

The alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted on this research.

Testing criteria :

if t_{test} or $t_{ratio} \geq t_{table}$, Ho rejected and Ha accepted with $df = (n_1 + n_2 - 2)$ at significant level 5% ($\alpha = 0.05$) and 1% ($\alpha = 0.01$)
 where $df = (n_1 + n_2 - 2)$
 $= 29 + 30 - 2$
 $= 57$
 $t_{table} = t (1 - 0.05) (57)$
 $= t (0.975) (57)$
 $= 1.67$
 $t_{table} = t (1 - 0.01) (57)$
 $= t (0.995) (57)$
 $= 2.39$

The result found was $t_{\text{test}} = 7.11$. Therefore t_{test} is higher than t_{table} of the students distribution, so the H_0 was rejected. So that, it can be concluded the average score of students' writing ability who are taught by using group task is higher than the students who are taught by using individual towards students narrative writing ability at the first semester of the eighth class at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Way Sulan in 2017/2018.

Discussion

Before the writer taught by using group task, the students were not interested in learning writing, because they often found the difficult words in writing activity. However after teaching by using group task, they were interested and they get easy in making narrative text. It is happened because in group task the students are able to share their idea one to another and the students can discuss about their difficulties to search alternative or to find the way in difficulties of study.

Based on analysis of the data and hypothesis test, the result of the calculation showed that the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and alternative hypothesis (H_a) accepted. There is a positive influence of using group task towards students' narrative writing ability. It is from the result of the data analysis, the t_{test} is 7.11 and the t_{table} is 2.00. It means that t_{test} is higher than t_{table} ($t_{\text{test}} > t_{\text{table}}$).

In this case the writer would like to say that group task is one technique that can motivate students' to learn English, especially writing. It is supported from the theory by Harmin (2006 : 242)" instructing small group to work at a task and, while working, practice an interpersonal skills. This strategy is a most powerful form of cooperative learning. It advances not only academic learning but also effective interpersonal skills."

Charles and Richard (1975:1) said that when decision-makers in public and private institutions in this society are faced with genuinely important task, it is likely that they will assign those task to group for solution. Then, While Mill (1976 : 2) states that a group as a unit composed of two or more persons who come into contact for a purpose and how considered the contact meaningful. It means that learning in a group will be better than individually. Related to the opinion above, it can be concluded that group task is solution to finish the difficulties of the students' task. The students are able to make a group with two or more persons of their groups.

Based on the analysis above, the writer concluded that students' writing ability for the students who are taught by using group task is higher than the students' writing ability for the students who are taught by using individual task. It is suggested the teacher to apply group task in teaching writing, because it can improve the students' writing ability especially in writing narrative text.

CONCLUSION

After discussing and analyzing the data, the writer would like to take the conclusion that there is different in achievement of writing ability between the students that are taught by using group task and the students are taught without group task at eighth class of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Way Sulan.

The average score of the students who are taught by using group task in experimental class is higher than that of those who are taught by using individual in control class. Experimental class (72.12) > control class (55.9). It means that teaching by using group task is appropriate technique in teaching writing, because the students could be active in writing activity. There is influence of using group task towards students narrative writing ability at the first semester of the eighth class at SMP

Muhammadiyah 1 Way Sulan in 2017/2018. It is shown by the result of data analysis in which $t_{\text{ratio}} > t_{\text{tabel}}$ ($t_{\text{ratio}} = 7.11$ and $t_{\text{tabel}} = 2.00$ in significant level 5% and 2.66 in significant level of 1%). Using group task in teaching writing has positive influence to help the students for increasing their writing ability.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, Kathy and Anderson, Mark. (1997). *Text Types in English*
- Brown, H. Douglas. (2001). *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*: Longman
- Byrne, Donn. (1995). *Teaching Writing Skills*: Longman Handbooks for Language Teachers. London and New York: Longman
- Finochiarro M. and C. Brumfit. (1997). *The Functional – National Approach: from Lory to Practice*. New York: Oxford University Press
- Gall, Meredith D., Gall, Joyce P., Borg, Walker P. (2003). *Educational Research*. New York: Pearson Education
- Hackman, J. Richard and Morris, Charles G. (1975). *Group Task, Group Interaction, and Group Performance Effectiveness*. Department of Psychology: University of Michigan
- Harmer, Jeremy. (1998). *How to Teach Writing*. Malaysia: Longman
- _____. (2004). *How to Teach English: An Introduction to the Practice of English Language Teaching*. Malaysia: Longman
- _____. (2007). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. Longman
- Harmin, Merril. (2006). *Inspiring Active Learning: A Complete Handbook for Today's Teachers*. Virginia USA
- Heaton, J. B. (1989). *Writing English Language Tests*. USA. Longman group UK Limited.
- Mill, C. Wright. (1976). *The Social Logical Imagination*.
- Raimes, Ann. (1983). *Techniques in Teaching Writing*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Tribble, Christopher. (1996). *Language Teaching Writing*: Oxford University Press

