

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DIARY IN IMPROVING THE ABILITY IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT

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Abstract

This research aims to prove if the use of diary is effective to improve the ability in writing descriptive text. The researcher applied a quasi-experimental research design which involved an experimental group and a control group. The samples were X MIPA 2 class, as the experimental group, and X MIPA 4 class, as the control group. They were selected by using a cluster random sampling technique. In collecting the data, the researcher gave pretest and posttest for both groups. The result of the data analysis shows that there is a significant difference between pretest and posttest results. The mean score of the experimental group before the treatment is 41.06 while the control group is 42.31. After the treatment, the mean score of the experimental group is 70.05 and the control group is 57.26. It is also shown that $t_{counted}$ is 3.87 greater than the t -table 1.68 which indicates that the research hypothesis is accepted. Thus, it can be inferred that the use of diary is effective to improve the students' ability in writing descriptive text.

Keywords: *Writing Ability, Descriptive text, Diary*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk membuktikan apakah penggunaan catatan harian efektif untuk meningkatkan kemampuan menulis teks deskriptif siswa kelas X SMA Negeri 5 Palu. Peneliti menerapkan desain penelitian kuasi eksperimen yang melibatkan kelompok eksperimen dan kelompok kontrol. Sampel adalah kelas X MIPA 2, sebagai kelompok eksperimen, dan kelas X MIPA 4, sebagai kelompok kontrol. Mereka dipilih dengan menggunakan teknik cluster random sampling. Dalam mengumpulkan data, peneliti memberikan pretest dan posttest untuk kedua kelompok. Hasil analisis data menunjukkan bahwa ada perbedaan yang signifikan sebelum perawatan adalah 41,06 sedangkan kelompok kontrol adalah 42,31. Setelah perawatan, skor rata-rata dari kelompok eksperimen adalah 70,05 dan kelompok kontrol adalah 57,26. Hal ini juga menunjukkan bahwa t -hitung 3,87 lebih besar dari t -tabel 1,68 yang menunjukkan bahwa hipotesis penelitian diterima. Dengan demikian, dapat disimpulkan bahwa penggunaan catatan harian efektif untuk meningkatkan kemampuan siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif.

Kata Kunci: *Kemampuan menulis, Test Deskriptif, Catatan Harian.*

INTRODUCTION

Among English language skills, writing is one of skills that should be improved by students. There are four basic skills of the English language, i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Those skills are divided into receptive skills and productive skills. The receptive skills are reading and listening because learners do not need to produce language to do these. Instead, they receive and understand them. They can be contrasted with the productive skills of speaking and writing. In the process of learning new language, learners begin with receptive understanding of the new items, then later move on to productive use. Learners usually learn to listen first, then to speak, then to read, and finally to write.

Writing is an ability involving grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. It is an activity to perform students' spoken language into the symbol or graphic. Written language is simply the graphic representation of spoken language, and that writing performance is much like an oral performance. Yet, the only difference is in a graphic instead of auditory signals. Writing is related to how to produce a written product. The process involves a series of thinking activities in which the writers have to transform their ideas into written text. Celce (1999:142) states, "Writing is the production of the written word that results in a text, but he must be readable and can be comprehended." In addition, Tarigan (1997:7) points out that writing is a language skill that is used for indirect communication. When thought is written down, ideas can be examined, reconsidered, added to, rearranged, and changed.

There are some reasons why writing is an important skill. First, it helps learners to receive English where its activity stimulates thinking and facilitates them to develop some language skills simultaneously. Second, writing as productive language skill plays an important role in promoting language acquisition as learners experiment with words, sentences, and large chunks of writing to communicate their ideas effectively and to reinforce the grammar and vocabulary that they learn in the class. Next, writing allows learners to build communication not only with their

contemporaries, but also with the future generation. In addition, writing plays an important role in our lives because sometime we need to make formal texts.

Writing is not only an important part of language learning and teaching, but it is also a difficult skill for learners because they are expected to write something to make readers understand the true meaning of their writing. Moreover, it forces the writer to think more than speaking it. They have to think about content, sentences structures, vocabulary, expressions, and spelling at the same time. The difficulty in writing is not only on how to generate and organize the ideas, but also how to translate the ideas into the readable text.

Based on the curriculum of senior high school including at SMAN 5 Palu which recommended by the government, there are some texts which have to be mastered by the students. One of the texts is descriptive text. The students can express their ideas, thoughts, and experiences. It also can create good imagination for the students, because they have to write something more details to describe people, places, and things. In this case, if students want to describe someone, they have to describe not only physical appearance but also their characters and behaviors.

From the initial observation that the researcher did at SMA Negeri 5 Palu, the researcher found that the tenth grade students had two main problems affecting their ability in writing English text. First, many students had limited vocabulary so they had little knowledge. Second, the students' writing was ungrammatical, particularly in using tenses and they lacked of opportunity to practice the pattern of the tense into their writing

Regarding the problems that are faced by the students, the researcher needs to find appropriate techniques for teaching writing descriptive text in order to help the students producing good writing. In this case, the researcher used the diary as a technique to help students develop their writing ability. When writing a diary, students have space to write what has happened over the day. In addition, family, friends, subjects, etc. can be topics to write in their diary. In short, the students can get many ideas about what to write down in their diaries.

Harmer (2007:128) states that are some benefits of diary writing. The first benefit is the value of reflection. A diary provides an opportunity for students to think about what they are learning and also how they are learning. The second benefit is freedom of expression. Diary writing allows students to express feelings more freely, or anything they want to write to. The next one is developing writing skills. Diary writing contributes to the students' general improvement such as their writing fluency. Their writing fluency will improve since they write regularly and become more familiar with it.

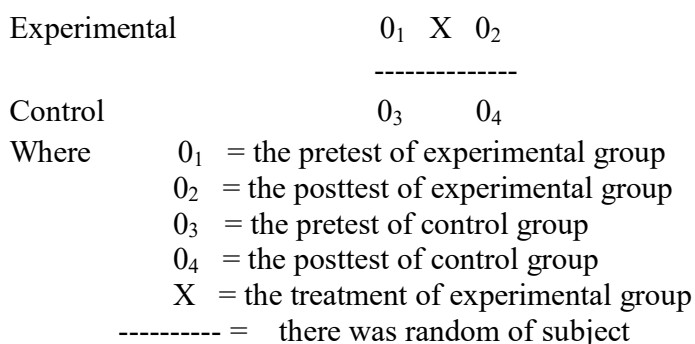
As mentioned above, one of the main problems was encountered by the students in writing is lack of practices. In the class, the students are not active to study because the teacher uses too much time to explain the instructional material. Diary, therefore, can be a better way to get practice in writing. It can encourage them to write whatever they want to write. Diary could solve this problem. Through diary writing, students can keep a record of ideas and, opinions of diary life. As Hornby (2003) implies that diary is a daily written record of one's experiences, observation, and feeling which are often arranged by date and have space for someone to write what has happened over the course of the day.

Hence, based on all those problems discussed above, the researcher used Diary to be the solution of problems. In other words, this research was conducted to prove whether Diary can be effective to develop ability in writing or not. Thus, the researcher formulated the problems statements as follows: "*Can the use of diary effective to the writing ability in the descriptive text of the tenth grade students at SMA Negeri 5 Palu?*" The objective of the research was to prove if the writing problems of the tenth grade students at SMA Negeri 5 Palu could be solved by using Diary.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses quantitative research and applies quasi experimental research design, specifically non-equivalent control group design. The researchers takes one

class as an experimental group and one class as a control group. In the quasi experimental design, both groups were given pretest to find out the students' writing ability. However, only the experimental group was given treatment. The control group was taught without using specific teaching method. After that, both experimental group and control group were given a posttest. The researcher employs the following design of research by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007:283) as follows:



Population is all subject of study (Arikunto, 1997:117). The research population consists of all the tenth grade students of SMA Negeri 5 Palu. It has 9 classes. Each class had 23-36 students. The total population is 295 students as shown in table 1.

Table 1. Population distribution

No	Classes	Number of Students
1	X MIPA. 1	35
2	X MIPA. 2	23
3	X MIPA. 3	35
4	X MIPA. 4	26
5	X MIPA. 5	35
6	X MIPA. 6	35
7	X IPS. 1	35
8	X IPS. 2	36
9	X IPS. 3	35
Total		295

A sample is a small group of the people selected to represent the much larger entire population from which it is drawn (Charles in Latief, 2013:181). In this research used, the researcher applied a Cluster random sampling technique in

selecting the sample. In selecting the sample, the researcher uses lottery. The name of each class was written on each piece of paper. Then, she chose them randomly. The piece of paper coming out firstly was the control class that is X MIPA 2, while the second one was the experimental class, X MIPA 4.

The researcher used two kinds of variable. They were dependent variable and independent. Based on the title of the research, the dependent variable was the students' writing ability in descriptive text while the independent variable was the use of diary in teaching writing.

In this research, the test would be used as the instrument of data collection. Pretest would be given to both of experimental group and control group. A treatment was given only for experimental group. Next, posttest would be given to both of experimental group and control group to measure how well the improvement runs in the experimental group. In taking score, the researcher used the scoring rubric adopted from Weigle (2002:117) as follows:

Table 2. The Scoring table of Writing

No	Writing Component	Rating	Score	Explanation
1	Vocabulary	0	0 – 39	Vocabulary inadequate even for the most basic parts of the intended communication
		1	40 – 69	Frequent inadequacies in vocabulary for the task. Perhaps frequent lexical inadequacies and/or repetition
		2	70 – 89	Some inadequacies in vocabulary for the task. Perhaps some lexical inadequacies and/or circumlocution almost no inadequacies in vocabulary for the task. Only rare appropriate and/or circumlocution
		3	90 – 100	almost all grammatical patterns
2	Grammar	0	0 – 39	inaccurate
		1	40 – 69	frequent grammatical inaccuracies

	2	70 – 89	some grammatical inaccuracies
	3	90 – 100	almost no grammatical inaccuracies
3 Mechanic	0	0 – 39	Ignorance of convention of punctuation and almost all spelling inaccuracies
	1	40 – 69	low standard of accuracy in punctuation and spelling
	2	70 – 89	Some inaccuracies in punctuation and spelling
	3	90 – 100	almost no inaccuracies in punctuation and spelling

Source: Adopted from Weigle (2002:11 7)

The data of the research was analyzed by using statistical analysis. First, the students' individual score was computed. Next, the researcher computed the mean score of each group. After getting the mean score of both experimental and control groups, the researcher computed the square deviation. All of the formula that used was proposed by Arikunto (2013). The last, in order to prove whether the hypothesis is accepted or rejected, the researcher needed to test the hypothesis on the data analysis. Before doing the test, the researcher stated the criteria of testing hypothesis; if the $t_{\text{counted}} > t_{\text{table}}$, the hypothesis is accepted. On the other hand, the hypothesis is rejected when the t_{counted} is lower than the t_{table} ($t_{\text{counted}} < t_{\text{table}}$).

FINDINGS

To find out students' writing ability through diary, the researcher examined the students before and after giving treatment. The pre-test for experimental group (X MIPA 2) on January 30th, 2020 and for also the per-test for the control group (X MIPA 4) was conducted on January 31th, 2020. The pretest was used to measure the students writing ability before treatment. Post-test was given after treatment, in order to find out whether or not the use of diary in writing ability in writing descriptive text.

Having noted the pre-test score, the researcher analyzed the standard score by dividing students individual gained score and maximal score and times the result by 100 as a constant value. In order to get the t-test value which would show whether the technique that the researcher applied significance or not, first, the researcher applied the formula that proposed previously to find the mean score of students' pre-test. The result of pre-test for both classes and groups is presented as seen in table 3.

Table 3. Deviation Score of the Pretest and Posttest of Experimental Group

No	Initial Names	Students Score		Deviation	D ²
		Pre-test (X ₁)	Post-test (X ₂)	D=(X ₂ -X ₁)	
1	ABD	22.22	22.22	0.00	0.00
2	AHM	33.33	66.67	33.33	1111.11
3	AIN	33.33	88.89	55.56	3086.42
4	ANG	22.22	44.44	22.22	493.83
5	ANTS	44.44	66.67	22.22	493.83
6	BTDT	55.56	88.89	33.33	1111.11
7	DEV	22.22	88.89	66.67	4444.89
8	EPN	33.33	88.89	55.56	3086.42
9	FAJ	33.33	44.44	11.11	123.46
10	FNS	55.56	88.89	33.33	1111.11
11	GUT	33.33	77.78	44.44	1975.31
12	INT	55.56	77.78	22.22	493.83
13	MDK	33.33	55.56	22.22	493.83
14	MRK	11.11	44.44	33.33	1111.11
15	NIU	55.56	77.78	22.22	493.83
16	NUG	77.78	88.89	11.11	123.46
17	NRKK	11.11	33.33	22.22	493.83
18	NUR	44.44	77.78	33.33	1111.11
19	NBL	77.78	88.89	11.11	123.46
20	RIK	44.44	77.78	33.33	1111.11
21	SIVI	55.56	66.67	11.11	123.46
22	SLH	33.33	88.89	55.56	3086.42
23	TRU	55.56	66.67	11.11	123.46
Total		944.44	1622.22	666.64	25925.95
Mean Score		41.06	70.05		

On the result of students' experimental group pretest, two students got the highest score. The standard score at the school is 75. It also shows that the highest score obtained by the students of experimental group was 77.78 and the lowest score was 11.11. After getting the total score of the students, the researcher computed the students' mean score of the experimental group was 41.06.

In post-test, it indicates that the students had much progress resulting from the treatment by which the highest score students reach 88.89 while the lowest score 22. Moreover, 8 students excelled the passing grade. This of course affected the experimental group on post-test was 70.05. It increased by 28.99 points from 41.06 on the pre-test. Put more simply, mean score deviation between the pre-test and post-test was 28.99.

Table 4. Deviation Score of the Pretest and posttest of Control Group

No	Initial Names	Students Score		Deviation $D = (Y_1 - Y_2)$	D^2
		Pre-test (Y_1)	Post-test (Y_2)		
1	AFT	22.22	33.33	11.11	123.46
2	AMD	44.44	44.44	0.00	0.00
3	ANS	55.56	66.67	11.11	123.46
4	ASW	22.22	66.67	11.11	123.46
5	CTA	11.11	44.44	33.33	1111.11
6	CIT	44.44	66.67	22.22	493.83
7	DIA	55.56	66.67	11.11	123.46
8	DWN	55.56	88.89	33.33	1111.11
9	FAY	44.44	44.44	0.00	0.00
10	FTMW	44.44	55.56	11.11	123.46
11	FTW	33.33	33.33	0.00	0.00
12	FIR	44.44	44.44	0.00	0.00
13	HUN	77.78	77.78	0.00	0.00
14	IMD	22.22	22.22	0.00	0.00
15	LARA	22.22	44.44	22.22	493.83
16	MIC	55.56	66.67	11.11	123.46
17	MABD	11.11	22.22	11.11	123.46
18	NND	66.67	77.78	11.11	123.46
19	NIS	44.44	55.56	11.11	123.46
20	NFN	44.44	77.78	22.22	493.83
21	RMDN	33.33	55.56	22.22	493.83

22	RFD	44.44	44.44	0.00	0.00
23	RMYT	44.44	55.56	11.11	123.46
24	VIVI	33.33	55.56	22.22	493.83
25	YAM	55.56	88.89	33.33	1111.11
26	ZAR	66.67	88.89	22.22	493.46
Total		1100.00	1488.89	344.41	7530.91
Mean Score		42.31	57.26		

The pre-test was also administered to the control group. The table above denotes that obtained by 1 student only met the passing grade of 75. Also, the highest score obtained by the students of the control group was 77.78 and the lowest score was 11.11. In addition, the mean score of the control group on the pre-test was 42.31 which was higher by 1.25 points than of the experimental group.

Students' individual scores of the control group in post-test rocketed as well. The highest score obtained by the students achieved the score of 88.89, while the lowest score achieved the score of 22.22. Having tabulated the students' individual score, the researcher analyzed the mean score of control group. So, the mean score of the control group on the posttest was 57.26. This score went up 15 point from 42.31 on the pre-test. Therefore, the mean deviation of the experimental group is 28.98, and the control group is 13.25.

DISCUSSION

The objective of this research was to find out whether the use of the diary is effective in improving the writing ability in the descriptive text of the tenth grade students at SMA Negeri 5 Palu. In this case, the researcher applied quasi experimental research as her research design. The researcher had an experimental and a control group as samples of this research. Both groups were chosen by using a cluster random sampling technique. The control class is X MIPA 4, while the experimental class is X MIPA 2.

Before giving the treatment, the researcher conducted pretest for the experimental and the control group. The purpose of the pretest is to find out the students' prior knowledge in writing descriptive text.

On the result of students' experimental group pretest, two students got the highest score. The standard score at the school is 75. The percentage of the students who got lower score than the standard score (75) is 92%. It means that only 2 students (8%) who got score more than 75. In the pretest, the researcher asked the students to write a text that describes their own self. Some of the students knew how to write a descriptive text but it was hard for them to describe their own self.

By seeing the data percentage, the researcher concludes that the students had problems in writing before the treatment. First, it was easier for the students to identify the vocabulary, but it was hard for them to match the vocabulary with a sentence. Most of the students have already known the basic vocabulary of how to write their hobbies, their school, something they like, their birth place and date, and their address. Second, the students found it difficult to make grammatically correct sentences. Third, the students ignored the mechanics of writing. The students did not care about employing punctuation, especially full stop and coma in their writing. Most of the students also disregarded the use of capitalization. In addition, there were spelling errors that were found on the students' writing text.

After conducting the treatment, the researcher gave posttest for both experimental and control group. The test had similar level of difficulties to both groups. The researcher giving the students topic "Write a descriptive text about "Yourself" with time limit was 45 minutes. They were not allowed to use dictionary. They felt free to write about their personality, appearance, and behavior.

The result of posttest of the experimental group is that 39% students got score more than the standard score (75). It has increased 31% from the result of the pretest score which 92% students got score lower than the standard score. Similarly, 12% students of the control group also got the score more than the standard score. In short, students' score has increased from the pretest to the posttest. Based on this result, the

researcher concludes that the use of diary in writing descriptive text is effective because there is a progress in students' score. There is also a significant progress by comparing the result of the t_{counted} to the t-table.

Regarding to the findings of this study, it is also supported by both previous researchers; those are Yulianti (2014) and Ningrum (2013). The first researcher discussed about how the students' writing skill was improved as a result of implementing diary writing as a teaching medium. Meanwhile, the second researcher did a treatment to the tenth grade students of SMA Alkhairaat Kalukubula to improve students' ability in writing recount text by using diary. Based on these findings, the researcher may conclude that diary as media is effective to improve the students' ability in writing skill, especially writing a descriptive text.

CONCLUSION

After conducting the treatment for six meetings and analyzing the data, it can be concluded that diary is effective in improving the students' ability in writing descriptive text. It is suggested by the mean score of the experimental group before the treatment (41.1) and after treatment (70.1). It is also proven by the result of the t_{counted} (3.9) which is greater than the t-table (1.7). In order to develop the English teaching quality, the researcher would like to share the suggestion for the development of teaching and learning writing, especially in writing descriptive text. The researcher would like to share the suggestions for students, teachers of English, and other researchers. For students, diary allows them to write about everything. It allows them students to express their ideas and experiences without being judged by others. It can also encourage them to write more often and rise up their writing ability. Hence, they should be given more tasks to write about descriptive text using diary for improving their writing ability. It is better for English teachers to provide the students with activities that are motivating, especially by using an appropriate media such as the use of diary. The teachers could also use other media and exposures because writing sometimes can be exhausting for the students. This

research discusses the use of diary to be effective students' writing ability. It is expected that the result of the study can be used as an additional reference for other researchers, especially those are interested in the teaching of writing.

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