

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CUBING STRATEGY IN TEACHING WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT

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ABSTRACT

The research paper is entitled “**The Effectiveness of Cubing Strategy in Teaching Writing Descriptive Text**”. There are two aims in this research; those are to find out whether or not the use of cubing strategy is effective to improve students’ ability in writing descriptive text and to know students’ responses towards the use of cubing strategy for improving students’ ability in writing descriptive text. The population of this research was the first grade students of SMAN 2 Majalaya. The number of the sample was 37 students for experimental group and 37 students for control group. The result of the pre-test showed that the t-test value was 0.012, where t-table at $p=0.05$ with $Df=N_1+N_2-2=37+37-2=72$ at the level of significance 0.05 for two tailed was 1.990. Then the writer could observe that the t observe was lower than t-table ($0.012 < 1.990$). There was no significant difference between experimental and control group at the beginning of the study or before the treatments were given. The result of post-test showed that the t-test value was 4.322, where t-table at $p=0.05$ with $Df=N_1+N_2-2=37+37-2=72$ at $p=0.05$ of two tailed, the critical value of t was 1.990, so t-observe was higher than that t-table ($4.322 > 1.990$). It means that there was significant difference in the result between using cubing as a strategy to improve students’ ability in writing descriptive text and conventional method. The questionnaire was only distributed to the experimental group to find out how the students’ responses toward the use of cubing strategy. The result showed that almost all of students (86.49%) liked and agreed with the use of cubing strategy and it helped them to write descriptive text. It meant that almost all of the students gave the positive responses towards the use of cubing strategy.

Keywords: Cubing strategy, writing, descriptive text

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini berjudul “The Effectiveness of Cubing Strategy in Teaching Writing Descriptive Text”. Terdapat dua tujuan dari penelitian ini yaitu untuk mengetahui apakah benar penggunaan strategi cubing efektif dalam meningkatkan kemampuan siswa menulis teks deskriptif dan untuk mengetahui tanggapan siswa terhadap penggunaan strategi cubing untuk meningkatkan kemampuan siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif. Populasi dalam penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas X di SMAN 2 Majalaya. Jumlah sampel yang digunakan sebanyak 37 siswa untuk kelompok eksperimen dan 37 siswa untuk kelompok kontrol. Hasil pre-test menunjukkan nilai hasil t-test 0,012, dimana t-table pada $p=0.05$ dengan $Df=N_1+N_2-2=37+37-2=72$ pada tingkat signifikansi 0.05 untuk two-tailed sebesar 1,990. Kemudian penulis dapat mengobservasi bahwa nilai t lebih kecil dari t-table ($0.012 < 1.990$). tidak terdapat perbedaan yang signifikan antara kelompok eksperimen dan kelompok kontrol pada awal penelitian atau sebelum treatments diberikan. Hasil post-test menunjukkan bahwa nilai t-test adalah 4,322, dimana t-table pada $p=0.05$ dengan $Df=N_1+N_2-2=37+37-2=72$ pada $p=0.05$ dari two tailed, nilai kritis sebesar dari t sebesar 1,990, maka nilai t-observasi lebih besar dari t-table ($4,322 > 1,990$). Ini berarti ada perbedaan yang signifikan dalam hasil

antara penggunaan cubing sebagai strategi untuk meningkatkan kemampuan siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif dengan metode biasa. Questionnaire hanya diberikan kepada kelompok eksperimen untuk mengetahui respon siswa terhadap penggunaan strategi cubing. Hasilnya menunjukkan hampir seluruh siswa (86,49) menyukai dan menyetujui penggunaan strategi cubing dan strategi ini membantu mereka untuk menulis teks deskriptif. Ini berarti bahwa hampir seluruh siswa memberikan respon positif terhadap penggunaan strategi cubing.

Kata kunci: Strategi cubing, menulis, teks deskriptif

BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH

Writing is one of important skill in English. Leo (2007) defined writing as a process of expressing ideas or thoughts in words. Through writing everyone can revealed and develop not only the structure of the sentence, but also the ideas, thinking, and their feeling about a meaning. Writing is a comprehensive ability that important for students because writing involves some aspects like grammar, vocabulary and ideas.

For the first grade of Senior High School students, the work of writing is presented in form of text types. The basic competency that should be achieved in the writing English subject is that they have ability to develop and produce written simple functional text in the descriptive text, recount text, narrative text and procedure text.

According to Siahaan (2013:115), "Descriptive text is a text which is intended to describe a particular person, place or thing". Descriptive text consists of introduction and description. Introduction is the paragraph that introduces or tells about general information of the character, and description is the paragraph that describes or explains the specific information of the character. The students can use the simple present tense and adjective clause in writing descriptive text.

Even though writing descriptive text important for the students of Senior High School, many of them are difficult in writing descriptive text. As stated by Murdiyani (2016), students feel that it is hard to translate concept in their brain to be a written language. There is a difficulty in expressing the ideas into their writing or organizing sentences into a good paragraph. The lack of vocabulary also caused them difficult to explore their ideas. In addition, they got difficulty in grammar, how to make sentences to be paragraph. The last, they always have difficulties in determining mechanics such as punctuation, capitalization, etc. On the other word writing is considered the most difficult to learn than others, because in writing involves many components that must be understood.

In order to solve the problems above, teacher should be creative to find the best way and appropriate strategy to improve students writing ability. Besides that, teacher has a role to motivate students in writing activity. Teacher should facilitate students with appropriate tools to increase their interest in writing.

One of the strategies that can be used by the teacher in teaching writing descriptive text is cubing strategy. As stated by Iskandar (2017:53), cubing is an instructional strategy that asks students to think about a concept from different perspectives. Cubing is useful for quickly exploring a topic from six different perspectives. Teachers could create a visual cube that serves as a starting point when they want students to analyze or consider various aspects of a topic.

Based on the fact above, the writer was interested to build up student's writing descriptive text ability by applying cubing strategy in the teaching and learning process. Therefore the writer entitles this research: "The Effectiveness of Cubing Strategy in Teaching Writing Descriptive Text".

LITERARY REVIEW

Writing

Writing as one of the English skills need to be learned by all of students in learning language. According to Murcia (1991), “writing is the ability to express one’s ideas in written form in a second or foreign language”. In addition, Heck (2017) also stated that writing is the bending and re-bending of words and ideas until they complement one another. In short, writing is the process of transferring someone’s ideas into written form.

Writing can become indirectly a tool for communication between the writer and the reader. It makes writing has a clearly defined purpose. In generating the ideas into the text, the writer should be able to make the reader understand about the writing. The way of the writer communicates their writing gives big impact about how easy or not the reader understands the messages that the writer tried to convey.

In generating the ideas into the written form, the writer should be able to make the reader understand about the writing. The way of the writer communicates their writing gives big impact about how easy or not the reader understands the messages that the writer tried to convey. The writers need to think hard and brainstorm the ideas, selecting the ideas systematically and logically before they write something. Beside the ideas, they also need to pay attention to grammar. Choose appropriate tenses to give specific information in their writing. Writer should enrich their vocabulary mastery to help them arrange a good sentence. Punctuation is also an important part in writing because it will help the reader to understand the meaning that the writer tried to deliver.

There are several components of writing process that proposed by Clark (2007) as follows:

1. Prewriting

At this stage, writers generate ideas, brainstorm topics, web ideas together, or talk or think about ideas. Before you write something, you need to figure out what you are going to write about. You might generate a main idea that you would like to explore, and then start collecting information and ideas that relate to that idea.

2. Drafting

Drafting is the next step after prewriting. As they write, writers should keep referring to their notes and the plan that they have determined in the prewriting stage, they can change the plan when needed. During the drafting stage, they should concentrate on getting ideas on paper, organizing information logically and developing the topic with enough detail for the audience and purpose.

3. Revising

Revision looks at the organization and the structure of the writing. When revising, writers analyze their writing for required traits: sequencing words in a lab report, descriptive language in science fiction story, topic sentences and supporting details in a persuasive essay.

4. Publishing

It occurs after the other steps are completed and the writers are ready to produce the final copy, which can be handwritten or typed on a word processor. When you publish a document, you are releasing it to the public for others to read. Not all of your writing will be taken to publishing stage, but even turning your task to your teacher in school constitutes publishing.

5. Reflecting

Reflecting is a key element in the writing process. It encourages the writer to think about his or her writing. Reflection also allows the writer to look back at brainstorming and the beginning of a writing project to see if the original goals were met.

When you write, you must have a purpose that you want to convey through the writing. People write to express their ideas and thought in form of text. The specific explanation about the purpose of writing is proposed by McMillan (1996), he stated that written language is used for these following purposes:

1. To express the writer's feeling.
2. To entertain the readers through aesthetical materials.
3. To persuade the readers about the writer's opinions, concept, and ideas.

Related to those statements about the purpose of writing, it says that there are a lot of purposes in writing. Every kind of writing has its' own purpose. Different kind of text in writing also has each own purpose. The purpose of writing is based on the writer thought.

Descriptive Text

There are several text types that should be taught in Senior High School, those are descriptive text, recount text, narrative text and procedure text. The focus of this research is on descriptive text.

Kane (2000) stated that description is about sensory experience, how something looks, sounds, tastes. Mostly it is about visual experience, but description also deals with other kinds of perception. On the other word, descriptive text contains list of characteristics of something in detail to describe particular person or place or thing. Descriptive writing is painting something or object by using words.

In short, writing a descriptive text is a way of picturing images verbally in speech or writing and arranging those images in order to the reader can feel the situation was described. In this research the descriptive text focuses on describing thing.

Marta (2005) stated that the generic structures of descriptive text are: the identification and description.

1. Identification

The identification identifies the person, place or thing to be described.

2. Description

The description describes parts, qualities, and characteristics of the person, place or thing to be described.

In addition, Grace & Sudarti (2007) stated that there are several language features used in descriptive text:

1. Using simple present
2. Use linking verb
3. Use adjective and compound adjectives
4. Use of degree comparison

Cubing Strategy

Cubing strategy is a strategy that used cube in the teaching and learning activity. Perez (2013:35) cited in Iskandar (2017:56) stated that cubing is a strategy designed to help students think about topic or idea from many different angles. It means that, cubing strategy help students more understanding about the topic using six different perspectives that appropriate with the topic. This strategy was originally used as a writing strategy to elaborate the topic from multiple dimensions. Cubes can be differentiated by readiness, interest or learning style in order to engage all students.

Nazario (2013) proposed the six perspectives of cubing strategy as follows:

1. Describe

Visualize the topic and list as many details, qualities, and characteristics as you can. This perspective asks the students to describe the topic, qualities, and characteristics clearly.

2. Compare or contrast
What is the topic similar to? What is it different from? List as much comparisons as possible. In this perspective, the students make list many comparisons as possible about the similarities and the differences.
3. Associate
What does the topic remind you of? What does it makes think of? What other ideas, events, or issues can that associate the topic. In this perspective, the students must connect the topic with the other object that reminds them about the topic.
4. Analyze
What does the topic consist of? What are its parts? How does it work? What types does it consist of? How is your topic meaningful and significant? In this perspective, the students must analyze about the topic details.
5. Apply
What can you do with the topic? How is it meaningful? How is it useful? In this perspective, the students must explore the application of the topic.
6. Argue for or against
What strengths or weaknesses does it have? What challenges does it face? How can it be improved? This perspective, the students have to make argument about the topic, and explain about the strengths or weaknesses about the topic.

The six stage formula can be used as a basis to write a paragraph or text. It represents an object, a person, a place, or an abstract concept Based on explanation above, cubing strategy has six different perspectives. This strategy is named as cubing because a cube has six sides. In cubing, students must examine a topic from every different perspective before writing more fully.

Cubing strategy has some advantages. It develops student's conceptual understanding of a topic and develops their writing skill. Cubing allows students to think about a topic from six different perspectives. It will help students with writer block in which students brainstorm each of the six perspectives and write it down. This strategy also helps them to think about a topic in depth. Bean (2008:35) cited in Iskandar (2017) stated that there are several advantages of cubing strategy, they are:

1. Allows students to explore multiple dimensions of a topic to grasp a deeper understanding.
2. The students are able to review the information they covered and clarify main points.
3. Helps students build a structured outline for a writing assignment.

Preszler (2014:11) said the steps of cubing strategy are as follow:

1. Select a topic. For example, The Civil War. Decide in advance how much time you want to devote to the cubing process. Informal cubing activities can easily be accomplished within a class period. However, activities can be extended if research is required.
2. Create groups based on readiness or interest.
3. Assign each group a perspective from which to explore the topic.
 - Describe the Civil War
 - Compare the Civil War to another war
 - Associate the Civil War with other issues, topics or concerns
 - Analyze the Civil War by discussing the events and decisions that led to the war

- Apply the lessons you have learned from studying the Civil War. How does learning about the Civil War help you understand events, issues, topics and decisions that still exist today?
 - Argue for or against the Civil War. Should the war ever have been fought? Take a stand and list your reasons
4. After the designated amount of time, ask representatives from each group to present their perspectives.

In the application of cubing strategy, teacher may modify the step of cubing strategy based on the need and the situation. On the other hand, it is possible for teacher to create appropriate step in using cubing strategy to achieve the goal of teaching writing activity. Those steps of using cubing strategy above will also do by the writer in teaching writing descriptive text in this research.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research used a quasi-experimental design to know whether or not cubing strategy can improve students' ability in writing descriptive text. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006:273), "quasi-experimental research is a good design of the research because although it is not true experiment, it provides reasonable controlled over most sources of invalidity and it is usually stronger than the pre-experimental design."

In this research design, there are two classes employed. One class is the experimental group which is applied the treatment of cubing strategy in teaching and learning writing descriptive text. Another class is the control group which get the conventional method in teaching and learning writing descriptive text. The formula of quasi-experimental design as stated by Hatch & Farhady (1982:28) is described as follow:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} G1 & T1 \times T2 & \\ \hline G2 & T1 & T2 \end{array}$$

Based on the design illustrated above, two classes were selected as experimental and control group. (G1) is experimental group which is given treatment (×) and (G2) is control group which is not given treatment. Pre-test (T1) was given to the control group and the experimental group, but in the experimental group after the pre-test is given and then the treatment is given. Post-test (T2) is held to assess students' writing skills.

Population and Sample

A population according to McMillan (1996:85) is "a group of element or cases, that conform to specific criteria and to which the result of the research are generalized." The population of this research was first grade students of SMAN 2 Majalaya consisting of twelve classes. The total population was 440 students.

The sample of this research is only two classes of first grade students. The researcher uses randomly sampling to determine sample. According to McMillan (1996:87), "in random sampling, every member of the population has an equal and independent chance of being selected for the sample." The researcher takes X IPS 2 as the experimental group that has 37 students and X IPS 1 as the control group that has 37 students. The experimental group is taught writing descriptive text by using cubing strategy, while the other was taught through conventional method. So, the total sample of this research were 74 first grade students of SMAN 2 Majalaya.

Research Variable

A variable as stated by Hatch & Farhady (1982:12) is defined as an attribute of a person or of an object which varies from person to person or from object to object. In addition, Hatch & Farhady (1982:15) stated that variables can be classified as dependent and independent variables as below:

Independent variable is the major variables which you hope to investigate. It is the variable which is selected, manipulated and measured by the researcher. In this research, the independent variable is cubing strategy.

Dependent variable is the variable which you observe and measure to determine the effect of the independent variable. In this research, the dependent variable is students' writing score.

Research Instrument

The test was used for collecting the data for pre-test and post-test. Pre-test has given to the students before giving the treatments and post-test has given to the student after giving the treatments. The pre-test was conducted to the sample. Both experimental and control group were given pre-test. This is purposed to obtain the data of students' writing skill in descriptive text, and to find out that students from both groups had the same capability of English before they received the treatment. The form of the test are gap filling test, rearrangement test and guided writing test of descriptive text about special thing for at least 3 paragraphs.

The research employed the post-test at the end of the research. It measured the students' writing skill in descriptive text after the treatments. It is employed in both groups; experimental and control group. This test was intended to find the differences between students' score of both control and experimental group. The purpose of test is for knowing how far the students' writing skill in descriptive text. The post-test uses the same form of the pre-test.

In addition, questionnaire is given to students who get the treatments. The questionnaire gives information about students' responses toward the use of cubing strategy in learning writing descriptive text. The questionnaire consists of 15 questions relating to the topic and research questions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

To find out whether or not using cubing strategy has better result to improve students' ability in writing descriptive text than conventional method and to find out the students' responses toward the use of cubing strategy for improving students' ability in writing descriptive text to the first grade of SMAN 2 Majalaya, quasi-experimental design is chosen as the research method in this research.

To obtain the data, two instruments are used in this research; those are the test and the questionnaire. The kinds of test which is used were pre-test and post-test. The research was conducted from August 7th, 2019 to August 20th, 2019.

The pre-test in SMAN 2 Majalaya was conducted on August 7th, 2019. The aim of the pre-test is to know the students' writing skill in descriptive text before treatment. The forms of the test are gap filling test, rearrange the paragraphs and making descriptive text about something.

The result of the pre-test showed that most of the students got low score which was under the *KKM* (Criteria of Minimum Score) of English subject in SMAN 2 Majalaya. The total score that must be obtained by student was 100. In the pre-test result of experimental group, there was one student who had score 46, it was the lowest score and one student got score 82, it was the highest score. Meanwhile, in control group there was one student who had score 23, it was the lowest score and one student got score 77, it was the highest score.

Based on the computation of the pre-test scores, with the $df = N_1 + N_2 = 37 + 37 - 2 = 72$, at $p = 0.05$ of two tailed, the critical value of t is 1.990. As the



value of derived t (t_o) is lower than that of the critical t (t -table) $0.012 < 1.990$, the Null Hypothesis (H_o) is accepted, and the Alternative Hypothesis (H_a) is rejected. It means that there is no significant difference result of the students' ability between experimental group and control group at the beginning of the research. In other word, the experimental group and the control group had similar ability in understanding descriptive text. Therefore, the next step namely treatment could be carried out.

After analyzing the result of pre-test score, the two groups were treated by different treatment. The experimental group was treated by using cubing in teaching writing descriptive text. The control group was treated by the conventional method. The treatment of both experimental and control group was carried out on 13th, 14th and 15th of August 2019. The treatment of control group was carried out at 10.20 to 11.50, while the treatment of experimental group was carried out at 12.30 to 14.00.

The post-test was conducted after the treatment on Tuesday, 20th August 2019 to both of groups. It was given to both of the groups with the same test. After getting the data of post-test scores, the writer analyzed it using t-test to determine whether or not there was significant difference in the result of the students' ability between the experimental group and the control group.

The result of the post-test showed that several students got good score which was higher than 70 for the post-test score. In the post-test result of experimental group, there was one student who had score 64, it was the lowest score and one student got score 96, it was the highest score. Meanwhile, in control group there was one student who had score 53, it was the lowest score and two students got score 90 it was the highest score.

Based on the computation of post-test scores, with the $df = N_1 + N_2 = 37 + 37 - 2 = 72$, at $p = 0.05$ of two tailed, the critical value of t is 1.990. As the value of the derived t (t_o) is higher than that of the critical t (t -table) $\rightarrow 4.322 > 1.990$, the Null Hypothesis (H_o) is rejected, and the Alternative Hypothesis (H_a) is accepted, stating that there is significant difference result of students' ability between teaching writing descriptive text by using cubing strategy and conventional method for improving students' ability in the first grade students of SMAN 2 Majalaya. This means that cubing strategy in teaching writing descriptive text to the first grade students of SMAN 2 Majalaya had successfully improved than the conventional method. It showed that the students writing skills from both groups were significantly improve. It also means that the use of cubing strategy is effective to improve students writing descriptive text ability.

To investigate the students' responses toward the use of cubing strategy, the questionnaire was given only to the students of experimental group after the post-test on Tuesday, 20th August 2019. The number of question consist of fifteen questions relate to the used of cubing strategy in the treatments. And then the students only mark "Yes" or "No" to each answer.

The result of the questionnaire showed that half of the students prefer writing skill than another skill in English. Even though, more than half of students disagreed that writing English is quite easy for them. They still had difficulty in writing English. More than half of students had known about descriptive text and they had known the difference between descriptive and another texts.

Students had known about descriptive text but they still had difficulty in writing descriptive text too. Even though, more than half of students also had no difficulties in understanding descriptive text. More than half of students stated that their difficulty was in finding the idea to write descriptive text. So, students need

appropriate strategy to help them in finding idea to write descriptive text. The strategy is needed to improve their ability in writing in English.

The result of the questionnaire also showed that the students' responses toward the use of cubing strategy in teaching writing descriptive text were positive. Almost all of students had not known about cubing strategy. After taught by using cubing strategy, almost all of students (86.49%) stated that they liked study writing by using cubing strategy. They agreed that cubing strategy made writing descriptive text easier and their writing skill especially in descriptive text were improved. Almost all of students (83.79%) stated that they had not difficulty in writing descriptive text by using cubing strategy.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis and the interpretation, the result of this research shows that teaching writing descriptive text by using cubing strategy got better result. It is proven by the result of the pre-test and post-test computation. The data shows that post-test scores are higher than pre-test scores. It means that the use of cubing strategy in teaching writing descriptive text have significant difference in the students' score on pre-test and post-test.

Based on the students' responses toward the use of cubing strategy in teaching writing descriptive text gave the positive responses. The students' ability in writing descriptive text is improved by cubing strategy. They felt writing descriptive by using cubing is easier. There are only several students who found any difficulty in using cubing strategy.

The writer concluded that cubing strategy is effective. It has significantly had better result than conventional method. The students gave positive responses toward the use of cubing strategy. In other words, cubing strategy made improve the students' ability in writing descriptive text and almost all of the students liked cubing strategy.

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