

**Implementing the Brainstorming Technique
to Improve Students' Ability in Writing Descriptive Text
(An Action Research to the Seventh-Grade Students at SMPIT Albina Kota Ternate)**

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Abstract: This research aims at improving the skill of writing descriptive texts through brainstorming technique for the seventh-grade students at SMPIT Al-Bina Kota Ternate. This classroom action research was initiated from the students' results in writing descriptive tests using the brainstorming technique, which consisted of two cycles. The researchers implemented the actions in the class. The qualitative data was obtained by the writing test results from 22 students in the seventh-grade grade at SMPIT Al-Bina Kota Ternate. This study showed that the brainstorming technique in the writing class was believed to be adequate to enhance students' ability in writing descriptive texts. It was shown from the results of students writing descriptive text in cycle 1 and cycle 2. Students' writing scores improved from 68.50 in cycle 1 to 84.18 in cycle 2. In addition, the brainstorming technique helped the students to generate ideas and organize them into paragraphs. As a result, they could manage the time for writing more effectively and perform the writing task more maximally. This activity implies that implementing the brainstorming technique in the writing instructions positively affects students' performance and achievement in writing descriptive text. Brainstorming helps the students to activate their prior thought before practicing their writings.

Keywords: brainstorming, students' ability, descriptive text

I. INTRODUCTION

Experts believe that writing is an essential skill in the EFL setting. It helps learners acquire the English language because the activity stimulates thinking and facilitates them to develop some language skills simultaneously. According to Bello (1997), writing plays an essential role in promoting language acquisition as a productive language skill. Students' inspection with words, phrases, sentences, and large pieces of writing illustrates their thoughts successfully and reinforces the grammar and vocabulary they experience in the classroom environment.

Not everyone can be an excellent writer, even in their native language. Blanchard and Root (2003: 1) say that writing in a new language can be more difficult. The same argument stated by Myles (2002) and Watskins (2004) is that writing is one of the most challenging competence for learners to master, especially in English as a foreign language (EFL) environment. Regarding the teaching writing in the EFL environment, there are several differences between the L1 writing

and the L2 writing, such as differences in using appropriate grammatical and rhetorical conventions and linguistic variety.

Teachers are demanded to plan suitable classroom actions that support the learning of specific writing skills effectively in a single space – planning, drafting, revising, and editing. The teacher can help students generate ideas through brainstorming, clustering, and rapid free writing at the planning. Since writing is a thinking process, writers need to unlock the hidden ideas they have in their minds to start writing (Seow in Richards and Renandya 2002: 304) because writing can be learned in different forms (Wagiran and Doyin, 2005). One of them is writing descriptive text. Keraf (2000) describes that in descriptive writing, the writer conveys the images, the feeling, and experience to the audience to imagine, or they are engaged on it. However, students make clear descriptions to make the reader imagine the object described, such as students explaining their class.

However, during our observation in SMPIT Al Bina Kota Ternate on March 22nd, 2018, researchers found that most students were challenged to develop their writing skills, especially in writing a descriptive text. This problem came from the lack of ideas to improve their writing ability and the teachers' strategy in teaching writing. Indeed, learners should master the writing skill because this skill has consistently been considered a significant ability in English language learning (Syarofi et al., 2018). Therefore, the researchers applied the brainstorming technique to develop students' ability in writing descriptive text.

Brainstorming is a short path to generate many ideas on a subject (Blanchard and Root, 2003:41). The purpose is to make a list of as many ideas as possible without worrying about how will use them. Rizi et al. (2013) studied the brainstorming technique for grade five in Tehran elementary school. They found that the brainstorming technique positively impacts the students' academic performance. Therefore, it is beneficial to help students organize their thoughts, whether they have too many or few ideas.

Considering the issues above, the researchers are motivated to conduct classroom action research in which she will use a brainstorming technique in the writing instructions. The study attempts to improve students' ability in writing descriptive texts in the seventh grade at SMPIT Al-Bina Kota Ternate.

II. METHOD

This research used a qualitative method and was approached by classroom action research (CAR) with four stages: planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting. Kemmis and McTaggart (1992) noted that classroom action research is an exploration and discovery conducted by an individual or group. The research subject was 22 students that consisted of 10 male students and 10 female students and an English teacher of SMPIT Al-Bina Kota Ternate. The subjects were chosen because the students in this class experienced some problems in learning English. Based on the observations conducted by the researchers in the preliminary study, the seventh-grade students were dealing with some issues of learning the writing skill. That the students had poor ability in writing was the concern of the researchers. Therefore, the researchers collected action research data through the pretest and posttest about brainstorming to determine the students' proficiency in writing. The instrument of this research was a prepared test questions sheet, and the entire tools were used to record the data during the implementation of the brainstorming technique. The data was collected from students' writing results and

analyzed using the rubric, including the content, mechanics, and organization. Using these scores for the criteria, the teachers measured the students' performance in writing narrative text using the brainstorming technique.

III. RESEARCH RESULTS

The Implementation and Discussion of Cycle

Planning of Cycle

In this planning session, researchers worked with teachers to determine actions to resolve focused issues. In this case, brainstorming techniques were chosen by researchers to improve students' writing skills. Therefore, it is crucial to know the students' writing skills before and after implementing the action.

Therefore, researchers designed pre-test and post-test instruments to measure students' writing skills. The instruments were written tests where students were asked to write descriptive texts. The test is given to the seventh grade before and after the action. Pre-tests and post-tests use the same printed sheets with different test items. The instruments are designed based on junior secondary school writing's standard competence and basic competence.

The researchers also designed lesson plans and materials based on lesson plans, including brainstorming activities to be implemented. After that, the researchers and English teacher decided that the researcher would become a teacher in practice. The decision was based on the considerations that the researchers knew more about the brainstorming technique implemented in the classroom. The researcher and the teacher (observer) discussed the lesson plans and the materials.

Action and Discussion

Before conducting the research, a pre-test was given to the seventh-grade students. The initial meeting was held on 26 September 2018. Students were asked to write descriptions of their favorite cartoon characters. They did the test in 40 minutes. Pre-test results showed that students' writing ability is low. In addition, most students achieved terrible grades. These results were consistent with the teacher's assertion that the daily value of students in writing was the lowest among other skills taught in English subjects.

The action of this cycle was done in 2 meetings on 26 and 27 September 2018. Brainstorming technique was held in every session. The topic studied in the first cycle was "describing cartoon characters." The learned micro-skills identified descriptive text language features, generic descriptive text structures, identifying descriptive text objectives, using appropriate word forms, using vocabularies correctly, making sentences correctly, and creating key ideas and supporting details. Write descriptive text during the action; both the researchers and observer teacher used an observation sheet to observe the teaching-learning process of either an agreed plan before being implemented, altered, or enhanced. Teacher-observer and researchers also observed student reactions to student implementation and improvement.

The first meeting was held on Monday, 26 September 2018. English teacher and researchers have decided in the planning phase, and the researchers instructed the class each session during the study. Meanwhile, the teacher became an observer. The class started at 09.20, and the lesson lasted 2x40 minutes.

The second session of the first cycle was held on Tuesday, 27 September 2018. Researchers started the class by greeting the students and checking their attendance. Then, the researchers continued the lesson given at the previous meeting. Researchers asked students to remember their activities before reading the text, a brainstorming activity. The researcher asked some questions about the action. The students still remembered it well. They could tell the researchers how they did activities and help them understand the text more easily. Researchers told students that such action was called brainstorming. That is relatively new for the students.

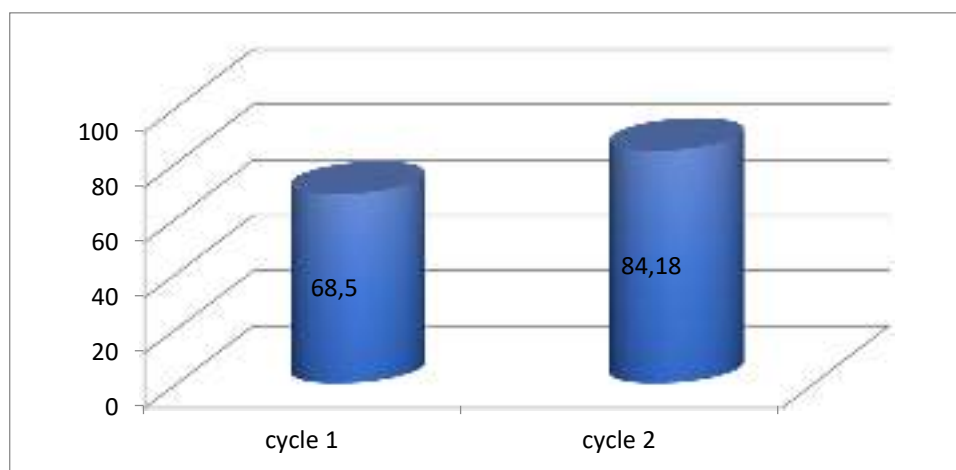
The researchers then made a presentation on brainstorming techniques. We explained what brainstorming was and how to do it. Researchers also showed students how this technique could be applied in writing activities. After ensuring all students got an idea of the brainstorming technique, the researchers asked them to try it out. The first practice of brainstorming was done in conjunction with the entire class. Researchers lead the students to do it. The researchers gave a topic to the class and allowed them 10 minutes to tell the ideas that came to mind about the issue. Then, the researchers wrote whatever we heard from the students on the board. The students showed their enthusiasm in following the activity.

Table 1: Mean scores of the Students' Writing on the Three Aspects

Students Code	Aspects of Writing						Score		
	Content		Mechanics		Organization		Cycle 1	Cycle 2	
	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 1	Cycle 2			
S1	2	2	2	3	3	3	80	90	
S2	2	2	1	1	3	3	71	87	
S3	2	3	2	2	2	3	70	87	
S4	2	2	3	3	2	2	73	92	
S5	1	2	2	2	2	1	63	75	
S6	2	3	2	2	2	3	72	91	
S7	2	3	2	2	1	2	64	80	
S8	1	3	2	2	1	2	60	78	
S9	2	3	1	1	2	3	67	83	
S10	1	2	2	2	2	3	65	81	
S11	2	2	3	3	3	3	80	94	
S12	1	1	1	2	1	2	60	78	
S13	2	3	2	2	2	2	70	87	
S14	1	2	2	3	2	2	69	80	
S15	2	3	3	2	2	3	72	90	
S16	2	4	2	3	1	2	63	80	
S17	2	3	1	1	2	2	67	81	
S18	2	3	3	4	2	2	69	81	
S19	2	2	2	3	2	2	70	85	
S20	2	3	3	2	2	3	73	93	
S21	1	2	1	2	1	1	62	79	
S22	2	2	2	3	2	2	67	80	
Mean							68.50	84.18	
KKM			> 70						

The result showed that the average scores of three aspects in writing tested were content, organization, mechanic. From the result, it could be seen that the scores of the students are various from cycle 1 and cycle 2. There were no students who achieved a score of 90 In cycle 1. The highest score was 80, and the lowest score was 60. Meanwhile, in the second cycle, 6 students achieved a score of above 90. The highest score was 94, and the lowest score was 75. There were no students who reached the highest score 100 classified as excellent. The detailed result of the student's improvement in cycle 1 ad cycle 2 can be seen in the figure below:

Figure 1. Students' Improvement on Writing Descriptive text



The figure above indicates that students' competence in writing descriptive text using the brainstorming technique is successfully implemented by the researchers to the seventh-grade students at SMPIT Al-Bina Kota Ternate.

IV. DISCUSSION

The researchers used a test and observation sheets in each meeting to improve students' writing and behavior during the teaching-learning process using the brainstorming technique. The results from the trial show the progress in each session. Hamalik (2008) stated that the improvement in the test is the changes in behavior in a person from not knowing to know better after the teaching-learning process. The results from observation show that students' behavior improved in the classroom, which indicates a positive impact after conveying brainstorming activity. Popham (1999) said that students' behavior is essential to be improved. The students' behavior towards subjects must be more positive after the learning process than before taking part in the teaching-learning process.

Based on the result above, there were some problems related to the writing score of the seventh-grade students. The issue centered is the ability of students to write. Therefore, a brainstorming technique is implemented in every cycle. Students into smaller groups consisting of 5-6 students each did some exercises related to brainstorming in pairs. At last, the students did the practice individually better.

Implementing the brainstorming technique effectively improves students' ability to write descriptive texts. It shows from the results of students writing descriptive text in cycle 1 and cycle 2. Students' scores for writing descriptive text improved from 68.50 in cycle 1 to 84.18 in cycle 2.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Implementing the brainstorming technique effectively improves students' ability to write descriptive texts. It shows from the results of students writing descriptive text in cycle 1 and cycle 2. Students' writing scores improved from 68.50 in cycle 1 to 84.18 in cycle 2. Brainstorming also facilitates the students to activate their prior knowledge before practicing their writings. It helps them generate ideas more effectively and release the anxiety that causes writer's block. In addition, by conveying brainstorming technique, students can organize their thoughts much easier in writing. It helped the students feel at ease in writing.

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