



## Enhancing the EFL Students' Achievement in Writing Descriptive Text through Think-Pair-Share

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate English as Foreign Language (EFL) students' achievement in writing skill (descriptive text) through Think Pair Share method. Therefore, the action research design was implemented to match with the purpose of the study. The techniques of collecting the data were writing test, observation, questionnaire, and interview. The result of the study shows that the students' achievement sustainably improved from the first evaluation, which was 65,50 to second evaluation, which was 75,09 and to the third evaluation, which was 85,50. The score continuously improved from the first evaluation to the third evaluation. Observation result shows that the students gave their good attitudes and responses during teaching and learning process by applying the application of TPS (Think Pair Share) method. Questionnaire and interview report shows that students agreed that the application of TPS (Think Pair Share) method had helped them in writing descriptive text. In conclusion, the application of TPS method significantly improved students' achievement in writing descriptive text

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 The Background of The Study

In learning the English language, there are four skills should be taught to students. They are speaking, listening, reading and writing. In practice, learning the lessons taught writing after speaking, listening and reading. But this does not state that learning writing was not important. In fact, since writing is a very important, writing is taught after the three important elements are taught and writing also is the very challenging subject for the students. It was related to Oshima and Hogue (1999) that writing, particularly academic writing is not easy. It takes study and practice to develop this skill. For both native speaker and new learners of English, it was important to note that writing was a process, not a "product". This means that a piece of writing, whether it is a composition for your English class or a lab report for your chemistry class is never complete; that was, it was always possible to review and revise, and review and revise again.

Through writing, each person is able to convey feelings, ideas, and announcements to others. Sharples (1999) stated that writing is an opportunity; it allows students to express something about themselves, explore and explain ideas. Student can convey their ideas in their mind by organizing them into a good text so that the others know them and they can think critically. Therefore, many people choose writing as a mean of effective and efficient communication of information to be

conveyed in some ways like posting letters, business letters and important information in a company's product.

Descriptive text is one genre that must be mastered by students in learning English. And theoretically, according to Evawina S (2010) descriptive text is a text vividly portrays a person, place, or thing in such a way that the reader can visualize the topic and enter into the writer's experience.

In fact, not all students are able to write descriptive text properly and in accordance with the existing elements in the descriptive text. Based on the result of observation, there were 75% from 60 students who were unable to write a descriptive text. Teachers of English already taught the material to students well but the students still had the problem in writing descriptive text. In addition, the researcher also had looked the teachers of English language teaching by lecture, and then asked the students to write descriptive text individually.

From the above, student's ability to write descriptive text was very low because the learning methods that was adopted by teachers of English language was a method that does not fit anymore in this day because it reduced the interest and liveliness of the students in the learning process so that students were bored and did not want to continue learning as they should.

At this present time, there are already implementations Learning Revolution in teaching and learning that was learning was no longer centered on teachers. In other words, it was called "Teacher Centered Learning (TCL)" but it has been centered on students. It was called "Student Centered Learning (SCL)" theoretically SCL is an approach to education focusing on the needs of the students, rather than those of others involved in the educational process, such as teacher and administrators. So the teacher was only as facilitators and a provider of solutions in learning is no longer only as a source of knowledge in the learning process.

Ransdell and Marie-Laure (2002) claimed that a good writing strategy can be trained, and it can improve writing performance. The method that is offered by researcher is the implementation of Student Centered Learning (SCL) and the development of Cooperative Learning (CL) that according to Slavin (1995) Cooperative Learning refers to variety of teaching methods in which students work in small group to help one another learn academic content. In cooperative classrooms, students are expected to help each other to discuss and argue with each other, to assess each other's current knowledge and fill in gaps in each other's understanding, so that the interest and active students in the learning process could be improved not only individually but in groups or together. Learning method which the researcher refers to is Think Pair Share (TPS).

Think Pair Share (TPS) is one of the Cooperative Learning which poses a challenging or open-ended question and gives students half to one minute to think about the question. Students then pair with a collaborative group member or neighbor sitting nearby and discuss their ideas about the question for several minutes. The think-pair-share structure gives all students the opportunity to discuss their ideas ([www.wcer.wvasc.edu](http://www.wcer.wvasc.edu)). It was designed to motivate the students to tackle and succeed at problem which initially were beyond their ability. It was based on the simple notion of mediated learning. Obviously, one alternative to solve the problem of writing descriptive text is by applying TPS. With the application of this method, it is expected to enhance students' skills in writing descriptive text properly and in accordance with the existing elements in the descriptive text.

### **1.2 Research Objective**

In relation to the background of study, the objective of the study was formulated as below.

- 1) To investigate the improvement of students' achievements in writing descriptive text through Think Pair Share (TPS) method.

### **1.3 Research Question**

In line with the research objective, the question was formulated as follows:

- 1) Does the students' achievement in writing descriptive text improve if they are taught through Think Pair Share method?

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### 2.1 *Writing Achievement*

Travers (1970) states that achievement was the result of what an individual has learned from some education experience. Additionally, Yelon, Weinstein, and Weener (1977) express achievement as the successfulness of individual, while another source Smith and Hudgins (1964) says that achievement was to do one's best, to be successful to accomplish tasks requiring skill and effort and to be recognized by authority. Furthermore, Tinambunan (1988) defines achievement as the students' grasp of somebody of knowledge or proficiency in certain skills.

Writing was a process of formulating and organizing ideas in right words to deliver the aim and present them on a piece of paper. According to Jones in R. Cooper and Odell (1977) writing was synonymous with discourse, and discourse was discussed in terms of its aims, it relate to the function of language, and in terms of its feature, which are the separate elements, devices, and mechanic of language. On the other hand, Reinking, Hard and Osten (1993) stated that writing was a way of communication and of course communicates all the time. And then Deporter and Heracki (2002) explained that writing was a whole brain activity, which use bright brain side (emotion) and left-brain side (logic). Although right and left-brain sides are used in writing, right brain side has a big position because it was a place, which appears new ideas and emotion.

From the explanation above, we can state that writing achievement is result of whole brain activity to formulate and organize ideas in right words to deliver and communicate the aims to the reader and present it on a piece of paper.

### 2.2 *Descriptive Text*

A descriptive text is a piece of writing that is intended to convey meaning to the reader through sensory details and provides image to the reader (<http://www.ehow.com>). Additionally, descriptive text is a text may be defined as a group of sentences that are closely related in thought and which serve one comment purpose often used to describe what a person looks like and acts like, what a place looks like, and what an object looks like (<http://www.examples-help.org.uk>). Furthermore, Pardiyono (2007) stated that description text is a type of written text, in which has the specific function to describe about an object (living or non-living things) and it has the aim that was giving description of the object to the reader clearly.

From the definition above, it can be concluded that description text is a text that describes a particular person, place or event in great deal. Description writing vividly portrays a person, place, or things in such a way that the reader can visualize the topic and enter into the writer's experience. It is a way to enrich others forms of writing or as a dominant strategy for developing a picture of what something looks like.

Furthermore, Jolly (1984) asserted that there are five types of descriptive writing text. They are:

- a. Describing Process  
Describing a process not only explains how something was done, but also explains why it was done and what was needed to complete the process.
- b. Describing and event  
To describe an event, a writer should be able to memorize and remember what happened in the event. Supposed the writer will write about Tsunami that was happened in Japan. In this case, he / she has to explain all details related to the event, so that the readers can imagine the real situation and condition.
- c. Describing a personality  
In describing a person, the first thing that we do was recognizing his/her individual characteristics. We need to describe people occurs fairly areas of physical attribute (hair, eyes), emotional (warm, nervous), moral attributes (greedy, honest, worthy, trust), and intellectual (cleverness, perception)
- d. Describing a place  
Presenting something concrete was the way to describe place, for example: a home, a hospital, and school.
- e. Describing an object

To describe an object accurately was done by providing the physical characteristics of the object such as the color, form, shape, and so on.

### **2.3 Part of Descriptive Text**

There are three part of descriptive text. They are: 1) Social function, which is to describe a particular person, places, or things, 2) Generic Structure, which is divided in to two. They are: a) identification: identifies the phenomenon to be described, and b) description: describe parts, qualities, characteristics, and 3) Significant lexico-grammatical Feature, that is focusing on specific participant, use simple present tense (Pardiyono, 2007)

### **2.4 Think Pair Share (TPS)**

The TPS is one of cooperative learning method that encourages individual participation and applicable across all grade levels and class sizes. Students think through questions using three distinct steps ([www.teachervwasion.fen.com](http://www.teachervwasion.fen.com)):

**Think:** Students think independently about the question that has been posed, forming ideas of their own.

**Pair:** Students are grouped in pairs to discuss their thoughts. This step allows students to articulate their ideas and to consider those of others.

**Share:** Student pairs share their ideas with a larger group, such as the whole class. Often, students are more comfortable presenting ideas to a group with the support of a partner. In addition, students' ideas have become more refined through this three-step process.

On the other hand, Think-Pair-Share is a strategy designed to provide students with "food for thought" on a given topics enabling them to formulate individual ideas and share these ideas with another student. It was a learning strategy developed by Lyman and associates to encourage student classroom participation. Rather than using a basic recitation method in which a teacher poses a question and one student offers a response, Think-Pair-Share encourages a high degree of pupil response and can help keep students on task.

#### **The steps of Think Pair Share**

- 1) Students will be seated in-group of 4.
- 2) Announce a discussion topic or problem to solve. (Example: Which room in our school is larger, the cafeteria or the gymnasium? How could we find out the answer?)
- 3) Give students at least 10 seconds of think time to THINK of their own answer. (Research shows that the quality of student responses goes up significantly when you allow "think time.")
- 4) Using student numbers, announce discussion partners.
- 5) Ask students to PAIR with their partner to discuss the topic or solution.
- 6) Finally, randomly call on a few students to SHARE their ideas with the class.

Teachers may also ask students to write or diagram their responses while doing the Think-Pair-Share activity. Think, Pair, Share helps students develop conceptual understanding of a topic, develop the ability to filter information and draw conclusions, and develop the ability to consider other points of view (<http://olc.spsd.sk.ca>).

## **3. METHOD**

### **3.1 Research Design**

This research was conducted as an action research. Stringer (2007) defined that action research is systematic approach to investigation that enables people to find effective solutions to problems they confront in their everyday life. Action research focuses on specific situations and localized solutions. Action research provides the means by which people in schools, business and community organizations; teachers; and health and human services may increase the effectiveness of the work in which they are engaged.

And the characteristics of the action research are:

- 1) An inquiry of practice within ( research was begun from the problems of teacher in his/her work)
- 2) Self reflective inquiry (the main method was self-reflection, and it was a little liberal but still attend the rules of the research.
- 3) The focusing of the research was teaching learning activities.
- 4) The objective was to make the teaching learning process become well.

According to Stringer (2007) action research is a collaborative approach to inquiry or investigation that provides people with the means to take systematic action to resolve specific problems. Action research is not panacea for all ills and does not resolve all problems but provides a mean for people to “get handled” on their situation and formulate effective solutions to problems they face in their public and professional life.

On the other hand, Stringer (2007) said that action research is as a spiral activity: plan, act, observe and reflect. Different formulations of action research reflect the diverse ways in which the same set of activities may be described, although the process they delineate are similar. There are, after all, many ways of cutting a cake.

The classroom action research was dynamic process. Evawina S (2010) states that action research processes involve a cyclic sequence. There are four steps in cyclic sequence. Namely:

**Plan:** In this step, the researcher finds the problem of students and plans to do what activity was applied.

**Action:** The plan, which has been designed, was done in this phase. The method of improvement was applied. The action was continuously done, until the researcher finds the improvement.

**Observation:** this step was the effect of the actions that have been done. During the learning process, the collaborator observe what the students do.

**Reflection:** the evaluation of action, which was applied. It can overcome the problems that appear in previous steps/cycle.

### ***3.2 The Instrument for Collecting Data***

In this research, the data was collected by quantitative and qualitative approach. Quantitative data were collected by administering composition text and qualitative was one research method that was describing the situation and the event (Sugyono, 2004).

Quantitative data was collected through evaluation sheet, which administered by the researcher. For gathering the qualitative data, the researcher used observation sheet, interview sheet and questionnaire. Observation sheet was used to identify all the condition that happened during the teaching learning process including teacher, students and the context of situation that were done by the collaborator, interview sheet was used when the writer want to identify the problems occurred in the learning process and questionnaire as the personal records which usually taken by the writer that was written up daily.

A collaborator was asked to observe and evaluate all the situations during the teaching learning process, the researcher, the students and the class in the teaching learning process.

### ***3.3 The Procedure of the Research***

Before doing the research procedure, the consistent choose one team administered observation and get the license research from the school and orientation identified the basic knowledge of students about writing descriptive text in the school. The procedures of data collection of the study were conducted within two cycles. First cycle had 3 meetings; second cycle had 3 meetings, so there 7 meetings in the action research included the meeting in orientation test. Each meeting included four stage namely planning, action, observation, and reflection.

### ***3.4 Scoring the Test***

In scoring the test of this research, the researcher applied the writing scoring technique that related to Refandi (2004) the writing scoring technique was the question and the answer are given to the students in writing form. In addition, this technique applied the five indicators of the writing descriptive text. The five indicators are; content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics.

### 1. Content

Scoring the content was based on the students' ability to write their ideas and information in the form of logical sentences.

### 2. Organization

Organization refers to students' ability to write their ideas and information such a good logical order to topic and supporting sentences are clearly stated.

### 3. Vocabulary

Vocabulary refers to the students' ability in using word or idiom to express idea logically. It also refers to the ability to use synonym, antonym, prefix, and suffix exactly.

### 4. Language Use

Language use refers to the students' ability in writing the sentence, simple, complex and compound sentence correctly and logically. It also refers to the ability to use agreement in the sentence and some other words such as noun, verb, and time signal.

### 5. Mechanics

Mechanics refer to the students' ability to use words appropriately and function correctly, such as punctuation and spelling.

For all components, students got the score 100 points, in which, the score for content was 30 point, organization was 20 point, vocabulary was 20 point, language use was 25 point, and mechanic was 5 point.

### 3.5 The Technique of Analyzing the Data

The quantitative data would be analyzed by using demographic analysis and the qualitative data will be analyzed based on the indicator.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Quantitative Data

#### 4.1.1 Writing Evaluation

The students' score increased from first evaluation to third evaluation. The writer gave the evaluation in second, fourth, and six meeting. During the research, it was found out that the students' score kept improving from first evaluation to last evaluation. By application TPS the students' score was significantly improved. The ranges of score improvement can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. *Range of Score Improvement*

| Range of Score Improvement | Total |
|----------------------------|-------|
| 26-36                      | 8     |
| 21-25                      | 7     |
| 16-20                      | 7     |
| 11-15                      | 6     |
| 6-10                       | 4     |
| Number of Students         | 32    |

There were 4 students who got the improvement of score 6-10. The score improvement was low, but in these range just 4 students who got the improvement from 6 until 10. Then no one got lower than 80. It meant they are good students but they did not pay attention to the lesson that was given by the teacher.

There were difference in the lowest and the highest of students' writing score in each writing evaluation, which was given during the research. The differences showed that there was a significant improvement of students' writing. The improvement of students' score in each writing evaluation can be seen in the following table:

Table 2. *Comparison Score of Students' Writing Evaluation*

| Type of Score        | Evaluation I | Evaluation II | Evaluation III |
|----------------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|
|                      | M1           | M4            | M6             |
|                      | Cycle I      |               | Cycle II       |
| <b>Lowest Score</b>  | <b>61</b>    | <b>72</b>     | <b>75</b>      |
| <b>Highest Score</b> | <b>80</b>    | <b>84</b>     | <b>92</b>      |
| <b>N</b>             | <b>32</b>    | <b>32</b>     | <b>32</b>      |

**Note:**

**M** = Meeting

**N** = Number of Students

From the table above, it was seen that students' score kept improving. In writing evaluation I, the lowest score was 61 and the highest score was 80. In writing Evaluation II, the lowest score was 72 and the highest score was 84 whereas in the last writing evaluation, the lowest score was 75 and the highest score was 92. It showed the significant improvement in students' writing descriptive text.

The improvement of students' score in writing descriptive text through TPS (Think Pair Share) also can be seen from the mean of the students' score in every writing evaluation. The mean of students' score can be seen on the table below:

Table 3. *The Improvement of Mean Scores of Students' Writing*

| Meeting                          | Total Score | Mean         |
|----------------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| <b>Evaluation I (Cycle I)</b>    | <b>I</b>    | <b>2096</b>  |
| <b>Evaluation II (Cycle I)</b>   | <b>II</b>   | <b>2403</b>  |
| <b>Evaluation III (Cycle II)</b> | <b>III</b>  | <b>2736</b>  |
|                                  |             | <b>85,50</b> |

The mean of the students' score in the first meeting was the lowest of all meetings. In the last meeting, the students' score improved. From the data analysis, the mean score of the students' writing increased from 65,50 to 85,50. It meant that the ability of students in writing descriptive text was improved.

In this research, the indicator of successful in writing descriptive text was if 75 % of students have got score up to 75 in their writing evaluation because the English passing grade at the school was 75. The number of the students who were competent in writing descriptive text is presented on the following table:

Table 4. *The Percentage of Students' Writing Descriptive Text*

| Evaluation | Cycle     | Meeting   | Students who got score 75 up | Percentage    |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>I</b>   | <b>I</b>  | <b>I</b>  | <b>3</b>                     | <b>9,37 %</b> |
| <b>II</b>  | <b>I</b>  | <b>IV</b> | <b>24</b>                    | <b>75%</b>    |
| <b>III</b> | <b>II</b> | <b>VI</b> | <b>32</b>                    | <b>100%</b>   |

In writing evaluation I, there were 3 students who got point 75 up. The percentage of students' achievement in descriptive text kept increasing when TPS method was applied. In the first cycle, 9.37 % students got points 75 up whereas in the second cycle 100 % students who got points 75 up. The range of the first meeting (9.37%) and the last meeting (100%) was 90, 63 %. It had been proved that 93, 75% students got the good score on their writing achievement. It can be concluded that TPS method worked effectively and efficiently in helping students in improving their achievement in writing descriptive text.

#### 4.1.2 Questionnaire

From the result of questionnaire, it can be found out that TPS method can improve the achievement of students because from the data no one of the students fill in disagree and strongly disagree then

no more than 4 students fill in the neutral. So most of the students fill in agree and strongly agree. It meant that this TPS method was very good for the students.

In significantly, from the data that was taken from questionnaire sheet I we could account that from the statement 1 until statement 8, the percentage of strongly agree was 331 with mean 41, 40%, agree 43,12 % with mean 53, 91 %, neutral 37, 5 % with mean 4, 69 % and disagree and strongly disagree 0 %. So, from this questionnaire we can conclude that the students was very interested and enjoying the TPS method in teaching learning process especially in writing descriptive text.

Besides that, from the data that was taken from the questionnaire sheet 2 it can be found in the first statement that the percentage of students who chosen a was 71,87 %, b was 3, 12 %, c was 25 % and d was 9, 38 %. It meant that most of students had learned to work to gather from this TPS method. So they were active in teaching learning process. And then from the statement 2 the students who chosen was 43, 75 %, b was 28,12 %, c was 15, 62 % and d was 12, 5 %. It meant that most of students had learned about pair accountability and pair responsibility. In additional, from the statement 3 the students who chosen was 84, 37%, b was 6, 25 %, c was 6, 25 % and d was 3, 12 %. It meant that most of students in this research had learned to produce something alone.

From the all questionnaire data, it can be concluded that the students were very interesting and enjoying the TPS method and they the students were not only improve their achievement in writing descriptive text but also improve their teamwork, responsibility and self-confidence.

## **4.2 Qualitative Data**

The qualitative data were taken from observation sheet, questionnaire sheet and interview that gained within two cycles.

### **4.2.1 Observation Sheet**

From the result of observation sheet, it can be concluded that teaching learning process by applying TPS method run well. The situation of teaching learning process was comfort, lively, and enjoyable. Because from the data that was taken from the first (I) meeting to the last (VI) meeting we can find out that the Note in the data got good and very good. It means the score in this data was just gotten from 3 to 4.

So this TPS method created a good environment in teaching learning writing in which students became active in the process of writing, focus their mind to the teachers' explanation, and share in their team and pair and then finish in individually. In individually work, the students could improve their confidence to finish the work because they had discussed in team and pair.

### **4.2.2 Interview**

From the interview data those were taken by the teacher and the students from the first meeting and the last meeting, we could find out that the teacher was very interesting to the students because the students were very active and enjoyed with English but students ability in writing descriptive text was not good enough and then the teacher did not have effort to improve it.

From the interview with the students in the first meeting, it can be found out that the students very interesting with English and most of the students like to write descriptive text, because from 6 students that the writer interviewed said like. In conclusion, most of the students like to write the descriptive text. That was why it was needed to improve their achievement in writing descriptive text by the application of TPS.

From the second interview that was taken from teacher, it can be find out that the application of TPS in teaching learning process especially in writing descriptive text was very helpful to improve the ability of students in writing descriptive text. And according to the teacher this method was very good because can make the students became active and enjoy the lesson.

Furthermore, from the last interview that was taken from the students it can be find out that most of the students like this method and the said that this method was very good to improve their achievement in writing descriptive text because they could be active and enjoy the material. And

from the 6 students, all of them said TPS was very good and just one student said that it was very busy but the student also like.

So, from the entire interview, it can be concluded that TPS method was very good to improve the students' achievement in writing descriptive text at SMP N 1 Bilah Huluh grade IX and the teacher will apply TPS in teaching learning process not only writing but also another subject.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

### 5.1 Conclusion

Having analyzed the data that have been presented in the previous chapter, it was found that average scores of students in every evaluation kept improving. It can be said that there was a significant improvement on the students' achievement in writing descriptive text by applying the application of Think Pair Share method. It can be seen from the improvement of mean of students' score, namely: the mean of first evaluation (66,44) increased to the mean of second evaluation (78,12) and the mean of third evaluation (87,56). The score continuously improved from the first evaluation to the third evaluation. Observation result shows that the students gave their good attitudes and responses during teaching and learning process by applying the application of TPS (Think Pair Share) method. Questionnaire and interview report shows that students agreed that the application of TPS (Think Pair Share) method had helped them in writing descriptive text. It can be concluded that the application of TPS method significantly improved students' achievement in writing descriptive text.

### 5.2 Suggestion

The result of this study showed that the application of TPS method could improve students' achievement in writing descriptive text. In relation to the conclusion above, some points are suggested, as follow:

- 1) The English teachers are suggested to use TPS (Think Pair Share) method as teaching method to stimulate the students' learning writing spirit in teaching writing process.
- 2) For the readers who are interested for further study (university students) related to this research should explore the knowledge to enlarge the understanding about how to improve students' achievement in writing and search another reference.

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