

THE EFFECT OF FOOTSTEP STRATEGY UPON STUDENTS' DESCRIPTIVE WRITING ACHIEVEMENT OF THE SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS OF SMP N 5 SINGARAJA IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2015/2016

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Abstract

The recent study aims at investigating the effect of using “Footstep Strategy” upon the students’ descriptive writing achievement of the seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 5 Singaraja in the academic year 2015/2016. To acquire the above aim of the study, a *posttest only control group design* was taken as the research design of the present study. The study took place in SMP N 5 Singaraja. The population was all the seventh grade students of SMP N 5 Singaraja. Based on the result of cluster random sampling, the researcher took class VIIB and VIIC as the sample of the study. Class VIIB was determined as the experimental group and VIIC as the control group. Both groups consisted of 36 students. The students of experimental group were taught to write with the guidance of “Footstep Strategy”, while the control group was taught by “conventional writing technique”. At the end of the experimental period, the groups were given a posttest. The result of the data analysis showed that students who were taught by using the Footstep Strategy performed better achievement than those who were taught by implementing conventional writing technique. It was shown from the mean score of the experimental group which was 75.19 and the mean score of control group was 65.00. Moreover, the result of t-test analysis showed that the t_o was 5.000. It was higher than the value of t_{cv} at 1.96 ($\alpha=0.05$). It indicated that the difference between the two groups was significant. In this case, the null hypothesis was rejected. In other words, there is a significant difference in the writing achievement of the seventh grade students of SMP N 5 Singaraja taught by using footstep strategy and those taught by using conventional writing technique.

Keywords: *Footstep strategy, descriptive writing, students’ writing achievement.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the four language skills, which is used as one medium to communicate with others. In the academic field, as well as in daily life, writing skill is needed to communicate our ideas to the readers. In other words, one way to express the language is through the written form. Teaching writing in the classroom is considered to be important. Therefore, this must be given a great attention by the teacher. From the statement above, there are two main reasons why teaching writing becomes important. Firstly, it can improve our grammatical structures, idioms, and vocabulary in learning process. Secondly, students will have the chance to be more active in order to find new vocabulary that they will use in their writing. They can explore the language deeply by doing that activity.

Based on some observations in writing classes, the writer knows that the competencies of students in building their writing are varied based on their behavior. There are many students who have low achievement in writing. It is because many students have a very low interest and motivation in the writing class. Although the teachers always teach them how to write a good paragraph, but they still are not able to write a good one. For instance, it can be seen when the teacher asks them to write a descriptive paragraph, the students always ignored it and did not write it immediately. They chatted with other students and took time to think about the topic that they would write about and were still confused how to start their writing. When the writing had to be submitted, they wrote the paragraph as soon as possible. They did not check the paragraph,

especially about the grammatical structure that they used and also the ideas in their writing whether or not it was coherent.

The poor ability of students indicates that most of the students of grade seventh in SMP N 5 Singaraja, have difficulties in their writing skill. The problem that is usually faced by the students in writing process is how to put and develop their ideas coherently into their writing. It can happen because the students did not have enough knowledge about how to develop their ideas into a good paragraph. Sometimes most of the students are unable to find the main idea and supporting ideas in order to organize the paragraph become coherent. Besides, the teacher also admitted that the students have less vocabulary and have difficulty in building sentences. They lack of vocabulary, consequently they frequently use one word for many times and always looking at a dictionary to find out the meaning of the words that they did not know.

Looking at the causes of the poor ability of the students in writing, especially writing a descriptive paragraph, the researcher wants to try to solve that problem by using a strategy which is called Footstep Strategy. The Footstep Strategy, which was created by Harford (2000), offered eight steps and if they were followed correctly, those steps would enable the students to write a descriptive paragraph smoothly and easily. Through its eight steps, the Footstep Strategy solved the students' problem in terms of getting started with their paragraph writing, defining the topic sentence that matched the rest of the paragraph and using words, which were not repetitive for their description.

Considering that Footstep Strategy can help the students in writing achievement, the writer is interested to investigate whether the implementation of Footstep Strategy give a significant effect upon the writing achievement of seven grade students of SMP N 5 Singaraja in the academic year 2015/2016. However, there was no research yet on the effect of the implementation of Footstep Strategy on students' achievement in writing, in which this strategy is used to improve students' achievement in writing skill.

2. OBJECTIVES

Based on the introduction above, the objectives of this study is to find out the significant difference between the students taught by Footstep strategy and those who were taught by the conventional method toward the seventh grade students' writing achievement in SMP N 5 Singaraja in the academic year 2015/2016.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research is designed in the form of experimental research. The design of this research is a post-test only control groups design. From this design, the experimental and control groups are equated by random assignment (Best, 1981: 69). At the end of the treatment, a post-test was conducted and the difference between the mean test scores of the groups is subjected to a test of statistical significance.

The population of this study was the seventh grade students of SMP N 5 Singaraja in the academic year 2015/2016. There were nine classes of the seventh grade students and each class consists of 36 students. Since the population was already divided into classes, the sampling technique used in this study is cluster random sampling. Fraenkel & Wallen (1993) stated that cluster random sampling can be used when it is difficult or impossible to select a random sample of individuals because of the existence of some restriction. In this case, the restriction is the students that had been divided administratively into classes. From cluster random sampling using lottery, it was determined that the samples of the study were VII B and VII C classes. After that, the subjects are divided into two groups; they were Control Group (CG) and Experimental Group (EG). In this case, the researcher also used lottery to determine them. Then, the result of the lottery showed that class VII B was taken as the experimental group and class VII C was taken as the control group.

There are two variables used in this research, namely dependent and independent variables. Dependent variables that are frequently studied include achievement, interest in a subject, attention span, motivation, and attitudes toward school (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993: 241). The dependent variable used in this study was students' achievement in writing paragraph. The

independent variables frequently manipulated in an educational research include methods of instruction, types of assignment, learning material, reward given to the students, and types of questions asked by the teacher (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993: 241). In this study, the independent variable used was the technique of the Footstep Strategy. The dependent variable in this study was measured by using post-test, conducted at the end of the experiment.

In collecting the data, the writer used some instruments, namely the writing test (post-test), teaching scenario, and writing rubric.

a. Writing achievement test (post-test)

Writing achievement test (post-test) is created to measure the achievement of the two groups in which the experimental group was treated by using Footstep strategy, while the control group is treated by Conventional method. The post-test is administered in the form of a writing test where the students in each group were assigned to make a paragraph about certain topic. The post-test is given for both experimental group and control group. The results of the test are analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics. The result of data analysis showed whether or not there is any significant difference of achievement in writing taught by using Footstep Strategy, compared with the conventional teaching method.

b. Teaching Scenario

The teaching scenario is used as guidance for the teacher in order to conduct the lesson in the two groups. Preparing teaching scenario could facilitate the teacher to preview the teaching and learning process and to monitor the situation of the teaching and learning process in the classroom. There are two kinds of teaching scenario used in conducting the research, the one Footstep strategy is implemented in the experimental group and the other one, in which the Conventional method is used in the control group.

c. Writing rubric

Writing rubric is used to determine students' achievement in writing a paragraph. The qualities of the students' paragraphs are determined based on the following criteria proposed by Anderson in Hughes (1989:91).

Moreover, before administering the post-test, the researcher does the try out test. The try out test was conducted in order to measure whether the test is valid and reliable or not. Fraenkel & Wallen (1993) stated that validity is the extent to which the tests measure what they are expected to measure. In this study, the researcher used content validity to show whether or not the test could be considered valid. Meanwhile, reliability refers to the consistency of the scores obtained or answered from one administration of an instrument to another, and from one set of items to another (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993: 146). In other words, reliability is the degree to which a test consistently measures whatever it is meant to measure.

There are some procedures that should be followed by the researcher in collecting the data. Those procedures are: Preparing the instruments of the study, deciding the population of the study, selected the two groups randomly as the sample of the study, determining the Experimental Group (EG) and Control Group (CG) through another random process, giving different treatment to the two groups, the experimental group was taught by implementing the Footstep strategy, while the control group was taught by implementing the Conventional teaching method, administering the writing test (post-test) for each group, and analyzing the post-test result of the two groups descriptively and inferentially.

In this study, the resulted scores of the post-test from the two groups are analyzed by using two types of statistical analysis, namely descriptive statistic analysis and inferential statistic analysis. Descriptive statistic analysis is used to analyze the data descriptively, while inferential statistic analysis was used to analyze the data inferentially.

4. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

As stated before, the aim of this study is to find out the significant effect of the treatment in students' writing achievement in writing descriptive paragraphs between the seventh grade students who were taught by using Footstep strategy and the one taught by using the

Conventional method. Based on the problem, it was hypothesized that there is a no significant difference in students' writing achievement in writing descriptive paragraph between those who are taught by using Footstep strategy and those taught by using the Conventional method. In order to answer the problem and prove the hypothesis, an experimental study was administered.

In this step, the data were analyzed to find the mean and standard deviation. The mean score was gained by adding up the students' score in a distribution then dividing them by the total number of students in a group. Meanwhile, the standard deviation was obtained by calculating the square root of the variance.

Table 1
The Mean Score and Standard Deviation of the Control and Experimental Groups

Posttest			
Control Group		Experimental Group	
<i>CG</i>	<i>SCG</i>	<i>EG</i>	<i>SEG</i>
65.00	8.88	75.19	8.40

Table above shows that the mean score of the control group was 65.00 and the mean score of the experimental group was 75.19. The standard deviation of the control group was 8.88 and the standard deviation of the experimental group was 8.40.

The data in this study were analyzed inferentially by using t-test (Independent Samples Test). To prove that the data were appropriate to be analyzed parametrically by using t-test, the data must be categorized as having a normal distribution and homogeneity of variance. The normal distribution of the data was analyzed by using Kolmogorov Smirnov Analysis under the Lilliefors significant corrections.

This statistic investigates whether or not the data are normally distributed. A low significance value indicates that the distribution of the data differs significantly from a normal distribution. In other words, the data can be categorized as having normal distribution if the significance value exceeds the value of 0.05. Table 10 shows the result of the normality test.

In the Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic table for the experimental group, it was shown that the Kolmogorov-Smirnov value was .141 in Sig .070, and for the control group was .120 in Sig .200*. Both of the significant values exceeded the value of .050, meaning that the data were distributed normally.

Table 2
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Statistic Test of Normality between the Groups

GROUP	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
TEST Experimental	.141	36	.070	.962	36	.240
Control	.120	36	.200*	.956	36	.156

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

In the Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic table for the experimental group, it was shown that the Kolmogorov-Smirnov value was .141 in Sig .070, and for the control group was .120 in Sig .200*. Both of the significant values exceeded the value of .050, meaning that the data were distributed normally.

To know the homogeneity of the variance data, a Levene Statistic test was conducted. In Levene statistic test, it was assumed that the variances of groups are equal whenever the significance value of the obtained data exceeds .050.

Table 3
Test of Homogeneity of Variance between the Groups

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
TEST	Based on Mean	2.992	1	70	.088
	Based on Median	2.806	1	70	.098
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	2.806	1	69.378	.098
	Based on trimmed mean	3.036	1	70	.086

When the probability of Levene's test for equality of variances is more than 0.05, it means that the data distributed were homogenous.

After the data were proven to meet the criteria of normal distribution and homogeneity of variance, the researcher administered the parametric t-test to analyze the data in terms of the significance of the mean difference of the groups.

Table 4
Independent Samples T-Test Result between Groups

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
POST TEST	Equal variances assumed	.139	.711	5.000	70	.000	10.19444	2.03884	6.12811	14.26078
	Equal variances not assumed			5.000	69.786	.000	10.19444	2.03884	6.12789	14.26100

The independent samples t-test procedure compares the means for two groups of cases. From the table above, it can be seen that the significance value of the Levenes' test for equality of variances (0.711) is greater than .050, which means the test result with equal variance assumed was used.

After deciding which result to be used, the researcher analyzed the result by using two criteria to determine whether the difference between mean score of the two groups is significant. Firstly, when significance value for the t-test is low (typically less than .05), it indicates that there is significant difference between the means of the two groups. From the above table, it can be seen that the significance value of the t-test in the study was low (.000). It indicated that there is a significant difference between the two group means. Next, when the

t observed is more than the t critical value, it also indicates that there is a significant difference between the two groups' means. From the table, it can be seen that the t observed (5.000) is larger than the t critical value (1.96). It also indicated that there is a significant difference between the means of the two groups. Therefore, the researcher concluded that the null hypothesis in this study was rejected.

Since this study was a kind of experimental research which was aimed at finding out if any significant difference occurred in the students' writing achievement between the two classes who were treated by using different methods. In this experimental research, the researcher used a new strategy in teaching writing and applied it in certain subjects and also systematically observed what happened.

As mentioned previously, there were two methods being applied in the present study. They were Footstep strategy and Conventional method. In this study the Conventional method is the method which is commonly used by the teacher in teaching writing. In the treatments, the students were given an example of things around them to give brainstorming before giving students a certain topic that they have to develop into a piece of writing. After that, the researcher gave some questions answers that have a close relationship with the topic. They were also introduced to the generic structure of descriptive text. While, Footstep strategy is a method consisting of eight steps. Those are; choosing the topic, write two or three topic sentence, brainstorming, creating sentences, organizing sentences, choosing the topic sentence, writing a closing sentence, and rewriting the final product. In the experimental group where the students were taught by using Footstep strategy, the students had to follow those eight steps in writing process. Before they started to write descriptive paragraph, firstly the researcher directed the students to make groups that consisted of six students each. Then, she distributed picture to be described by the students. Second, the researcher distributed the thinksheets to the students. The students used this sheet to explore their ideas and wrote them in the thinksheets by following eight steps in the footstep strategy. In other words, thinksheets were provided in order to be used as guidance by the students in writing their descriptive paragraph. After that, the researcher allowed the students to describe the picture clearly by using their own words.

Firstly, they had to choose the topic which appropriate with the picture that was given by the researcher. As a topic was chosen by the students, they continued to develop their ideas by making three possible topic sentences that had relationship with the topic. In this activity, the researcher guided the students in making a good topic sentence. Then, they continued brainstorming their ideas according to the topic. In this activity, the students might write phrases as many as possible according to the picture that they were seeing. During the activities, the researcher controlled the students in developing their ideas. Based on the observation, the students looked seriously and they worked cooperatively in doing their task. The researcher asked the students to discuss with their friends in the group if they faced problems when writing. She allowed the students to have discussions because, in the discussion the students could learn much from their friends. If one student had difficulties in making a topic sentence and brainstorming his ideas, the others students in a group helped him in making the appropriate topic sentence and brainstorming his ideas. Sometimes, they asked the researcher if they found difficulties in making a topic sentence and brainstorming their ideas. When writing in groups, students brainstormed the ideas together. If one student did not know some vocabularies that he would use in his writing, other students helped him to find those vocabularies and gave ideas. It made them easier because they could share their ideas.

The aspect of cooperation was quite important during the process of learning. When the students worked within groups, they learned how to collaborate with others. Besides, the high ability students could help the lower ability students in developing their understanding of the materials. In addition, the classroom situation was more positive and friendly when the students were involved in cooperative interaction.

After brainstorming their ideas, the students continued their writing by creating sentences based on what they had done in the brainstorming step. They created sentences as many as

they wanted to write that had a relationship with the topic and based on what they had brainstormed before. During the process of writing, the researcher controlled the students' works. She approached those students who were found to stay silent in the group without writing their sentence. She gave a warning for those students who like chatting in the classroom. As a result, all students looked to be very serious with their own work. Moreover, if the researcher found the students' works were not suitable between what they had brainstormed with the sentence that they made, she told the student to check and correct their work directly. Sometimes, the students asked her to check their work and whether or not it is correct. After all students completely finished making the sentences, they organized these sentences. During this activity, the teacher told the students to arrange their sentences in order to make a good paragraph. Then, it was continued by choosing one appropriate topic sentence from the second step that they would use in their writing. The topic that they choose should have a close relationship with what they had done in the previous steps. Sometimes, the students came to the researcher and asked whether their topic sentences were already suitable or not. They also asked their friends in a group when they had difficulties in choosing the appropriate topic sentence that they used in their writing. The next step is writing a closing sentence. Every student had a role to make their own closing sentence. The closing sentence should be concluded in a general what they had written based on the topic given. After the students wrote their closing sentences, they continued by rewriting the final product. In this activity, the students should write what they had done in the previous steps in a piece of paper. During this activity, the researcher walked around in the classroom and checked the students writing to ensure that they were following the steps of the Footstep strategy. After they finished, they have to submit their works to the researcher.

On the way of teaching process, the researcher took some role that made the students seriously and more comfortable doing their task. For instances, the students could be divided into some small groups consisting of six persons and the groups should be heterogeneous so that the clever students could help their friends who got difficulties. The troublemakers could also be separated from their groups. By dividing the students like this, it was expected that the students would be braver to discuss about their problems in writing descriptive paragraph in the groups and there would be more group discussion about grammar, vocabulary, and sentence building would be created. Besides, the researcher was also assigned to introduce several commonly used conjunctions, and adjectives to the students to make the students began to be familiar with several conjunctions and adjectives commonly used for writing descriptive paragraph. The researcher was also assigned to remind the students always to use appropriate punctuation and capital letters in their paragraphs. On the way of handling the students' behaviour, more attention should be given to the students who did not pay attention to the researcher's explanation, and the students should be prohibited from chatting during the teaching and learning process. It could be seen that the application of Footstep strategy allowed more variations in the process of writing. They were enabled to work individually or in group. Those variations avoided weariness and made the lessons more attractive for the students.

As compared to the students in the experimental group, the students who were taught by the Conventional method did not conduct the strategy proposed on the object that they wanted to write. When they received the topic, they started to think about an object. After the researcher distributed the picture to be described, they started to think what would they wrote on a piece of paper. Some students looked confused and said they did not know what to write. Some students looked hesitate to make a draft but they wrote the paragraphs directly. It made them difficult to organize the paragraphs.

In the control group, the students worked individually in writing their paragraph. On the one hand, it helped them to be more concentrated in writing. On the other hand, they did not have chance to share ideas. As what was discussed previously, in the experimental group, students and researcher had a lot of chance to discuss, give comment, opinion, or correction that contributed to the organization or content of the paragraph. In the Conventional teaching

method, there was no or little additional idea from their friends or researcher since the students mostly worked individually.

The Conventional method allowed little variation during the process of learning. All activities were conducted in the classroom where students mostly worked individually. Since there was little variation, the classroom situation became monotonous. Students were easily got bored.

5. CONCLUSION

The main purpose of the study was to find out the significant difference in students' achievement in writing descriptive paragraphs between students taught by using Footstep strategy and taught by Conventional Method of teaching. To find out the purpose of the study, an experimental study with posttest-only equivalent-groups design was conducted. The study took place in SMP Negeri 5 Singaraja. The population was all of the seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 5 Singaraja. Based on the result of cluster random sampling, class VII C was determined as the control group and class VII B was determined as the experimental group. The control group was taught by using Conventional method and the experimental group was taught by using Footstep strategy. A post-test was administered after the treatments were given by the teacher. The results of the post-test were subjected to further analysis.

The data from the posttest were analyzed by using descriptive and inferential analysis. From the analyses of students writing achievement, it was found that the students who were taught by using Footstep strategy performed better than those who were taught by using the Conventional method as represented by the mean scores of both groups. The t-test also showed that the difference of the mean score between the groups was significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis in the present study was rejected. In conclusion, there was a significant difference in students' achievement in writing descriptive paragraphs between students who were taught by using Footstep strategy and those who were taught by using the Conventional teaching method.

6. SUGGESTIONS

In relation to the result of the study, some suggestions could be proposed as follows:

1. For the English Teacher

It is recommended that teachers apply Footstep strategy in teaching writing to the students since the method has been proven effective in improving the students' writing achievement. It was because the Footstep Strategy is an effective strategy to improve the students' achievement in developing and organizing ideas, using suitable English vocabulary, applying correct English grammar, and applying mechanics in writing. The English teachers could also develop some modifications to make this strategy become more enjoyable for the students.

2. For the Students

Since the Footstep Strategy is shown to be an effective strategy to improve the achievement of the students of class VII B SMP Negeri 5 Singaraja in writing descriptive paragraph, it is suggested that the students should use the thinksheet of the Footstep Strategy every time they wanted to write a descriptive paragraph. The thinksheet did help the students in developing and organizing their ideas. Therefore, it would help the students in producing a good piece of descriptive writing.

3. For other researchers

It is suggested that other researchers to conduct more elaborate study on this strategy, either in teaching other genre of writing or other language skills, for the development of this strategy in language teaching.

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