

TEACHING DESCRIPTIVE WRITING BY USING CUBING STRATEGY TO THE EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS OF SMP N 22 PALEMBANG

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Abstract: The objectives of the study are to find out whether or not there is a significant improvement on the eighth grade students' descriptive writing achievement who are taught by using Cubing strategy at SMP N 22 Palembang and to find out whether or not there is a significant difference between the eighth grade student's descriptive writing achievement between those who are taught by using Cubing strategy and those who are not at SMP N 22 Palembang. The population of this study consisted of 230 eighth grade students of SMPN 22 Palembang. The sample of this study was taken by using purposive sampling. There were 62 students taken as sample. Each class consisted of 31 students from class VIII 3 as control group and class VIII 6 as experimental group. This study used quasi experimental design. The instrument used in collecting data was writing test. The test was administered twice, as a pre-test and post-test for both control and experimental groups. The result of the test were analyzed by using SPSS 16. The data of pretest and posttest of the experimental and control groups were analyzed by using independent sample t-test and paired sample t-test in SPSS program. The findings showed that the p-output from paired sample t-test (sig2-tailed) was 0.000 which was lower than 0.05 and the t-value (11.020) was higher than t-table with $df=30$ (2,0423). P-output from independent sample t-test was 0.000 which was lower than 0.05 and the t-value (8.827) was higher than t-table with $df=60$ (2,0003). It means that there was a significant difference on the eighth grade students at SMP N 22 Palembang who are taught by using Cubing Strategy.

Keywords : *cubing strategy, descriptive writing*

INTRODUCTION

Writing is a part of language skills and it becomes one of important aspects in learning a language. Petel and Jain (2008, p. 125) state that writing is essential features of learning a language because it provides a very good means of fixing vocabulary, spelling, and sentence pattern and writing is the most efficiently acquired when practice in writing parallels practice in other skills. Moreover, writing ability is important for students in the process of English learning, by writing, they students could remember and memorize vocabularies and organize them into good paragraph.

Teaching writing means to help who have difficulties in writing. Rass (1997, p. 1) mentions that writing is a difficult skill for native speakers and non active speakers alike, because writer must balance multiple issues such as content, organization, purpose,

audience, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and mechanics such as capitaliation. Writing skill is very important skill to be learnt in learning a foreign language which includes the development of an idea, knowledge, and experience. In addition Pasand and Haghi (2013, p. 75), define that writing is one the most important skills in learning a foreign language the nature of which has become clearer nowadays which involves the development of an idea, the capture of mental representations of knowledge, and of experience with subjects.

Based on School-based Curriculum (KTSP 2006), several text types are taught to the eighth grade students, they are narrative text, recount text, and descriptive text. Being able to comprehend and to respond all of the texts is needed for students, but in this study the researcher will focus on descriptive text. Mukarto (2007, p.140) says that descriptive text is a kind of text to describe something, someone or place. Descriptive text has two main parts, they are identification and description. Descriptive text is like describig white house, animals, fruits. Kane (2000, p. 351) states that description is about sensory experience, how something looks, sounds, tastes.

A preliminary study was conducted on May 26th, 2016 at SMP N 22 Palembang. By interviewing the English teacher, some problems in the teaching and learning writing was found that, the students were confused on how to organize their ideas, and writing was considered as a boring activity and also the students were having a difficulty to develop their imagination, these make them do not know what they should write, especially in descriptive text, then the students' grammatical abilities were still low. Furthermore Kern & McGuire (2003, p. 92) mention that descriptive text is typically more difficult because students have fewer experience with them, therefore students need explicit instruction in the ways text are organized and they need practice with all of the writing modes, which are termed genres in the school. Therefore, to solve those problems the teacher should be creative to find the best way and the strategies how to improve, motivate and establish the condition of the students in writing descripttive text because teacher's role very influence the student's achievement. Therefore, Snow (2002, p. 48) state that teacher quality as one of the most critical variables in student's achievement. So, teacher's role is very important to determine the best things for the students in order to they are challenged to learn especially in writing descriptive text.

There are many writing strategies that can help students learn in writing. One of the strategies that can be used by the teacher in teaching descriptive text is Cubing strategy. Cubing strategy is an instructional strategy that asks students to consider a

concept from a variety or different perspectives. Axelrod and Cooper (2010, p. 568) state that Cubing is useful for quickly exploring a writing topic, probing it from six different perspectives. It means that, in applying cubing strategy students can develop their ideas about the topic. Furthermore by using this strategy, students also can analyze a topic in depth. In addition Head & Lester (1999,p.29) state that Cubing strategy encourages students to look at information in different ways and to use different ways of critical thinking, this strategy can be used in descriptive writing, this strategy can work individually or group to go through each side of the cube.

LITRATURE REVIEW

Concept of Teaching

Teaching means to help and share knowledge to others and also can give information on how to do something. Brown (2007, p. 7) says that teaching may be defined as showing or helping someone to learn how to do something, giving instruction, guiding in the study of something, providing with knowledge, causing to know or understand. Furthermore teaching is also to facilitate the students to be able in learning the material. Brown (2000, p. 7) states that teaching is guiding and facilitating learning, enabling the learner to learn, setting the condition for learning. Coe, Aloisi, Higgins, and Major (2014, p. 2) mention that great teaching is defined as that which leads to improved student progress. It means a great teaching as that which leads to improve student achievement using outcomes that matter to their future success. A teaching is great based on a teacher. A good teacher will teach a great teaching and will make the students become a good learners. Moreover, great teacher will have some strategies to facilitate students a deeper understanding of the information, it called teaching strategies. Therefore, Franzoni and Assar (2009, p. 19) state that teaching strategies are the elements given to the student

Concept of Writing

Writing is very complex communication process which includes a number of cognitive and metacognitive. Richardson and Morgan (2003, p. 286) state that writing may be the most complex communication process within the communicative arts. Similarly, According to Negari (2011, p. 299), writing is a complicated process which

involves a number of cognitive and metacognitive, for instance; brainstorming, planning, outlining, organizing, drafting, and revising. Further, writing isn't only complex but also hard to teach where we need to master the grammatical and other components of writing.

Furthermore, Harmer (2004, p. 44) states that writing has mechanical components like any other skill; those are, handwriting, spelling, punctuation, and the construction of well – formed sentences, paragraphs, and text. The teachers of writing skill should realize if the students are qualified for those components before moving to the process of writing itself. However, writing is not easy, it needs a lot of knowledge to write well such as how to use appropriate vocabulary, grammar and how to select the ideas. According to Sakolik in Nunan (2003, p. 88), writing is mental work of inventing ideas. He adds that the writer does a process such as imagination, organizing, drafting, editing, reading, and rereading.

Furthermore, Linse (2005, p. 88) says that writing is a combination of process in gathering ideas and working with them and make reader comprehensible to the writer ideas. Based on the two experts opinion, it can be concluded that writing is a way to express ideas or thoughts and to organize them into sentence and paragraph based on the determined pattern. Students will be taught to make sense on some information in order can express their writing. Hanson (2009, p. 135) states that stimulate students' thinking by inviting them to write about the stories, chapters, or books they read in ways that challenge their creativity and critical thinking skills.

In addition, there are several components of writing process that proposed by Clark (2007, p. 10) as follows :

1. *Prewriting*

At this stage, writers generate ideas, brainstorm topics, web ideas together, or talk or think about ideas. Teachers explain that students may get writing ideas from personal experiences, stories, pictures, magazines, newspapers, television, and a variety of other sources.

2. *Drafting*

Students begin to put their ideas on paper. Students need to keep in mind the genre or format, audience, and purpose.

3. *Revising*

Revision looks at the organization and the structure of the writing. When revising, students 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. They also ask questions of their writing: “Does it make sense? Is anything out of order? Should anything be added or deleted? ”. While editing, looks at the mechanics of the writing. So, students must understand how to do both.

4. *Publishing*

At this stage, teacher allows students to celebrate their hard work. It occurs after the other steps are completed and the students are ready to produce the final copy, which can be handwritten or typed on a word processor

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.

Concept of Cubing Strategy

Perez (2013, p. 35) states 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. According to Forget (2004, p. 124), the six sides are describing, associating, analyzing, applying, and arguing. This strategy was originally intended to be a writing strategy to explore topics or subjects from a variety of dimensions. A concrete visual of a cube is used to consider these multiple dimensions. Cubing works well when students are locked into a particular way of thinking. It allows students to look at an issue or topic from a variety of angles and to develop multidimensional perspectives. Cubes can be differentiated by readiness, interest or learning style in order to engage all students. Cubing enables you to consider your topic from six different directions; just as a cube is six-sided, your cubing brainstorming will result in six "sides" or approaches to the topic.

According to Nazario (2013,p. 329) proposes that six perspectives of Cubing strategy as follows.

- a. **Describe.** Visualize the topic and list as many details, qualities, and characteristics as you can.

This perspective, the teacher ask the students to describe the topic, qualities, and characteristics clearly.

- b. **Compare or contrast.** What is the topic similar to ? What is it different from? List as many comparisons as possible.

This perspective, the students make list many comparisons as possible about the similarities and the differences.

- c. **Associate.** What does the topic remind you of ? What does it makes think of ? What other ideas, events, or issues can that associate with the topic.

This perspective, the students must connet the topic with the other object that remind them about the topic.

- d. **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?

This perspective, the students must analyze about the topic details.

- e. **Apply.** What can you do with the topic ? How is it meaningful ? How is it useful?

This perspective, the students must explore the application of the topic.

- f. **Argue for or against.** What controversies surround the topic ? 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 and essay. “It” represents an object, a person, a place, or an abstract concept Based on explanation above, cubing strategy has six different perspectives. It is known as cubing because a cube has six sides. In cubing, students must examine a topic from every different perspective before writing more fully. Cubing requires students to construct meaning about a topic from six different perspectives.

The Procedure of Cubing Strategy

Sejnost (2009, p.169) proposed procedure of Cubing strategy as follow :

1. Introduce the topic and the six perspectives from which it might be considered.
 - a. The sudent's pay attention to teacher explanation on the topic that going to learn.
 - b. The student's attention teacher explanation about six perspective of the cube.
2. Next, allow students five minutes to consider each side of the cube.
 - a. The students consider each side of the cube.
 - b. The students are devided into small groups.

3. Finally, ask students to write about the topic from any one or the six possible aspects.
 - a. The students in their groups write the topic from six perspective of the cube.
 - b. The students combine the six perspective of the topic become whole descriptive text.
 - c. The students collect their writing.

The Advantages of Cubing Strategy

There are some advantages of cubing strategy. They are developing students conceptual understanding of a topic, developing students activity, and developing students paragraph writing skill. Alteri (2010, p.61) says that cubing can be disigned to help students look at a topic from different perspective. The purpose of the activity is to help with writer block in which students brainstorm each of the six perspective and write on of the these perspective (describing, associating, comprising, analyzing, applying, and arguing). This strategy can help the students to analyze the topic in depth. In addition, Bean (2008, p. 35) explains the benefits of Cubing strategy 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 assignmen.

Concept of Descriptive Text

Descriptive text is a text which describes a specific person, please, thing, or any subject. Nadell, McMeniman, & Langan (2003, p. 155) state that descriptive writing can be defined as the expression, in vivid language of what the five senses experience. Therefore, students write clear description by using their sense in order to make the reader can imagine the object that being described. Furthermore, Tompkins (1994, p. 111) states that descriptive writing is painting pictures with words. As Jolly (1994, p. 56) says that in descriptive text, there are some categories that should be considered in writing description text. First, place, and position: direction. Second, measurement: weight, size / volume, distance. Third, shape, and pattern. Fourth, colors and textures. Fifth, material and substance. Sixth, technical vocabulary; faces and bodies, character, clothes, building, weather, and so on. Finally, use any value. So, descriptive text is a kind of writings which

describes object or any subject with detail. Such as colors, size, shapes, textures, materials, subject, technical of vocabularies and value of the object.

The students write clear description by using their sense in order to make the reader can imagine the object that being described. Furthermore, Tompkins (1994, p. 111) states that descriptive writing is painting pictures with words. Therefore, the purpose of descriptive is to convey the reader what something look like. McCarthy (1998, p. 5) also states that descriptive writing is the domain of writing that develops images through the use of precise sensory words and phrases, and through devices such as metaphor and the sounds of words. It means that how we look, smell, taste, feel, or sound will be used to create a visual image of people and place in a text. On the other hand, descriptive writing may be defined as a writing process which involve human sense to feel the situation directly.

According to Tompkins (1994, p. 112), writer uses spesific technique in descriptive writing to create vivid, multisensory word picture.

1. Adding specific information

- a. Identify specific activities and behaviours
- b. Name the characters
- c. Identify the setting
- d. List attributes

2. Creating sensory images

Writers incorporate the senses into their writing to create stronger images and make their word more vivid.

3. Making comparisons

One of the most powerful techniques that writers use to describe something is to compare it to something else.

4. Writing dialogue

Another way writers show, not tell, is by adding dialogue to their writing instead of summarizing what the characters talked about.

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Descriptive text should consist of generic structure, such as: identification and description. Pardiyono (2010, p. 44) state that the descriptive text follows some particular stages.

1. Identification

Identification (introduction) is a statement or a short paragraph that identifies the object that is going to be describe, it is usually intersting and able to provoke the reader to be eager to read the text.

2. Description

It may consist of one of several paragraph. This part is used to give sufficient description about the object as mentioned in the identifcaion part. The description of the object can be done according to different angles, such as size, length, strength , color, height, condition, of the location, weather, qualities, shapes, etc.

RESEARCH DESIGN

In conducting this research, pretest-posttest nonequivalent groups design was used in term of explanatory research design to find out the improvement and the differences and intepret the result that may appear. The pre- and posttest design approach of quasi-experimental design with pretest and posttest was used.

The population of this research was eighth grade students of SMP N 22 Palembang consisting of seven classes. The total population was 230 students. The sample was taken by using purposive sampling because the sample was chosen with

some considerations. First, the teacher of English was similar of each class. Second, the total of the students were also similar. Therefore the sample was VIII 3 and clas VIII 6 (31 students for each class).

The test was used for collecting the data for pretest and posttest. Pretest has given to the students before giving the treatments and posttest has given to the student after giving the treatments. The pretest was conducted to the sample. Both experimental and control group were given pretest. It measured the students' writing achievement before treatment. The form of the test was writing test and the students wrote three paragraphs about 90 – 150 words by choosing on of three topics, such as : favorite artist, my classroom, and my bedroom. The same as pretest, in posttest three raters checked and give score to the students' work. The result of this test compared with the result of pretest in order to know the effect of teaching writing by using cubing Strategy to students' writing ability. From the posttest, the writer got the data that can be used to measure the students' progress taught by using cubing Strategy.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In analyzing the data, data were obtained from quasi experimental design and calculated by means of SPSS 20 software (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Moreover, the researcher used and described some techniques, such as data description, prerequisite analysis, hypothesis testing.

Result of Descriptive Statistic

The result of descriptive statistics in pretest scores in control group showed that the total number of sample was 31 students. The minimum score was 2, the maximum score was 5, the mean score was 3,45 and the standard deviation was 0,792, while for posttest scores in control group, the minimum score was 2, the maximum score was 6, the mean score was 3.75, and the standard deviation was 0,916. The result of descriptive statistics pretest scores in experimetal group, the minimum score was 2, the maximum score was 5, the mean score was 3.18 and the standard deviation score was 0,640 and posttest scores in experimental group the minimum score was 4, the maximum score was 8, the mean score was 6,0, and the standard deviation score was 1.068.

Result of Normality Test

The data is categorized normal if the data is higher than 0,05 and the result showed that the pretests in control and experimental groups were 0.771 and 0.801 Then, in posttests in control and experimental groups were 0.692 and 0.649. It can be concluded that the data were considered normal since they were higher than 0.05

Result of Homogeneity Test

The data is categorized homogene if the data is higher than 0,05 and the result showed that the pretests scores in control and experimental group was 2,757 and the posttest scores in control and experimental group was 1,446 it can be concluded that the data was homogeneous since the score were higher than 0.05.

Result of Hypotheses Testing

In measuring the significant improvement, the paired sample t-test was used for testing the students' pretest to posttest scores in experimental groups. It was found that the p-output is 0.000 with $df=30$ (2,0423), and $t\text{-value} = 11.020$, It can be stated that there is a significant improvement from students' pretest to posttest scores in experimental group taught using Cubing strategy since p-output is lower than 0.05. It can concluded the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted.

Table 1. Result Analysis of Paired Sample T-Test From Pretest Posttest Score in Experimental Groups

	Paired Sample t-test			Ha
	T	Df	Sig.(2tailed)	
Using Cubing Strategy at SMP N 22 Palembang	11.020	30	.000	Accepted

In measuring the significant difference, the independent sample t-test was used for testing student's posttest scores in control and experimental groups. It was found that the p-output was 0.000 and the t-value was 8,827. Since the p-output was lower than 0.05 level and the t-value (8,827) was higher than critical value of t-table ($df\ 60= 2,0003$). It can be stated that there is a significant different from students' posttest to posttest scores

in control and experimental group. It can be stated that the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted. It can be stated that there was a significant difference on students' reading comprehension score taught by using Cubing strategy and those who are not at SMPN 22 Palembang.

Table 2. Result Analysis of independent Sample t-test from Posttest Scores in Experimental and Control Groups

Using Cubing Strategy and those who were taught by using teacher's method.	Independent Sample t-test			Ha
	T	Df	Sig.(2 tailed)	
	8.827	60	.000	Accepted

Based on the table analysis, it was found that the p-output was 0.000 and the t-value was 8.827 It could concluded that there was a significant difference on students' descriptive writing taught by using Cubing Strategy because the p-output was lower than 0.05 and the t-value was higher than t-table (df 60 = 2,0003). Therefore, it was concluded that the null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) was accepted.

The researcher conducted pretest and posttest by both experimental and control group, the researcher found students difficulties in writing, such as the students could not develop their imagine and could not construct generic structure in descriptive writing, the student's did not know how to start, how to develop their ideas, or how to conclude the essay. they could not write descriptive based on the language features and they got bored in writing because they lacked the technical skills of writing acceptable compositions in writing. Richard and Renandya (2002, p. 303) say that writing is the most difficult skill for language learners to master, the difficulty is not only in generating and organizing ideas, but also in translating these ideas into readable text.

Then, the researcher conducted treatments in experimental group by using Cubing Strategy which allowed students to combine their picture and text to write and memorize a topic easily which were posted on the wall.

The result in pretest test between VIII.3 and VIII.6 calculated that the students' score in class VIII.6 was lower than class VIII.3 to overcome this problem, the researcher assumed that class VIII 6. was suitable as an experimental group which got treatments by using Cubing strategy.

In this research the researcher conducted in 12 meetings in experimental group. In the first meeting, the students did know what they wanted to do in their writing, the students were confused to follow the direction in Cubing strategy, because this the first time for the students study with the rule. In the second meeting the students more active and motivated to made some paragraphs. The researcher explained the sides of cube to make the students organized their mind with the side of the cube. In the cube there are six side, which has different mean and functions. This strategy was intended to activate students' prior knowledge about descriptive writing. Finally, they could write a topic based on the language feature, generic structure and good vocabularies because they tried to remember vocabularies recognized the sides of the cube. Therefore, after getting treatment and posttest, it was found that there was significant improvement between pretest and posttest in experimental group. Those facts were the result between maximum pretest score in experimental group was 5 and the maximum posttest score was 8. Moreover, the students' pretest score to posttest score in experimental group have a p-output 0.000 with t-value 8.827 since the p-output was lower than 0.05 level.

Therefore, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted. In control group, the students were only given pretest and posttest. There was not any treatment from the researcher. The students in control group were taught by using teacher's method. for the control group, they had difficulty to answer pretest. They could not write descriptive well, most of them write less than one paragraph, they could not write their writing based on the language feature, therefore, the meaning could not be understood well and they wrote the composition both in English and Indonesian. Those facts were the result between maximum pretest score in control group was 6. and the maximum posttest score was 6. Moreover, the result of paired sample t-test on that group.

CONCLUSION

In this research, the researcher concluded that there was a significant improvement on the seventh grade students' descriptive writing who were taught by using Cubing strategy. The students' pretest score to posttest score have a p-output 0.000 since the p-output was lower than 0.05 level with t-value 8.827 was higher than $df=38$

(2,0423). It could be stated that the null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) was accepted.

Moreover, there was a significant difference on the eighth grade students' descriptive writing between those who were taught by using Cubing strategy and those who were taught at control group. The students' posttest score in experimental and control group have a p-output 0.000 since the p-output was lower than 0.05 with t-value 11.020 was higher than t-table (df 60 = 2,0003). Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) was accepted.

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