

## Learning Strategy towards Students' Descriptive Writing Achievement Taught by Using Pick – List – Evaluate – Active – Supply – End Strategy

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### Abstract

This study is an experimental study with a factorial design. The aims of the study were to find (1) the significant improvement on students' descriptive writing achievement taught using PLEASE strategy, (2) the significant improvement in poor category taught by teacher's strategy, (3) the significant difference on students' descriptive writing achievement taught by PLEASE and teacher's strategy, (4) the significant difference in very good and fair categories taught by PLEASE strategy, (5) the influence of language learning strategy towards students' descriptive writing achievement in very good and fair categories, (6) the influence of language learning strategy towards students' descriptive writing achievement taught by PLEASE strategy, and (7) the interaction effects between language learning strategy toward students' descriptive writing achievement taught by PLEASE and teacher's strategies. In conducting my research activities, 72 out of 150 students were selected as the sample of the study using a two-stage cluster random sampling technique. The results of the study showed that first, the result analysis of measuring showed that significant improvement on students' descriptive writing taught using PLEASE strategy using paired-sample test was found since the p-output (0.000) is lower than the significant level at 0.05. Second result analysis by using paired-sample test in measuring the significant improvement on students' descriptive writing achievement in poor category which was taught by using teacher strategy was found since the p-output (0.000) was less than the significance level at 0.05. Third analysis in measuring a significant difference on students' descriptive writing achievement which was taught by PLEASE and teacher's strategy using independent-sample test was not found since the p-output (0.013) was greater than the significance level at 0,05. Fourth analysis in measuring the significant difference on students' descriptive writing achievement in very good and fair categories taught by PLEASE strategy using independent-sample test was not found since the p-output (0.286) was higher than the significance level at 0.05. Fifth result analysis on the influence of language learning strategy towards students' descriptive writing achievement in very good and fair categories using one-way ANOVA was found since the p-output (0.000) smaller than the significance level at 0,05. Sixth, the result analysis of measuring the influence of language learning strategy towards students' descriptive writing achievement taught by PLEASE strategy using one-way ANOVA was not found since the p-output (0.115) higher than the level of significance level at 0.05. The last analysis of measuring the interaction effects between language learning strategy toward students' descriptive writing achievement taught by PLEASE and teacher strategy using two-ways ANOVA was not found since the p-output (0,430) was bigger than the significance level at 0,05.

**Keywords:** strategy, language, learning, writing, descriptive, PLEASE strategy

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## Introduction

Language is a means of communication to connect people. Without language, it is difficult for people to communicate with others. English is as one of the international languages and its position as a foreign language in the teaching system in Indonesia so that English is taught from elementary to university level (Abrar & Mukminin, 2016; Azkiyah & Mukminin, 2017; Habibi, Sofwan, & Mukminin, 2016; Haryanto & Mukminin, 2012; Kamil & Mukminin, 2015; Mukminin, Muazza, Hustarna, & Sari, 2015; Mukminin, Masbirorotni, Noprival, Sutarno, Arif, & Maimunah, 2015). In addition, the 1989 law on the Indonesian educational system gives English a place as the first foreign language among other foreign languages used in Indonesia such as German, Arabic, or Japanese (Abrar, Mukminin, Habibi, Asyraf, Makmur, & Marzulina, 2018).

In learning English, students have to learn four language skills. One of the skills that has an important function for students is writing. Writing is part of the language skills and is an important aspect of language learning (Makmur, Mukminin, Ismiyanti, & Verawati, 2016; Mukminin, Ali, & Ashari, 2015). Richard and Renandya (2002) 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 ideas into text. Furthermore, he also mentions that writing is a difficult skill for native language speakers and non-active speakers, as writers must balance complex issues such as content, organization, goals, readers, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and mechanics. In addition, Pasand and Haghi (2013) said 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 (as cited in Saputra and Marzulina, 2015)

From the description, it reveals that writing needs many aspects to be mastered since it was involved three activities such as: generating, organizing and translating ideas into a written text. Besides the above factors in language learning, learning strategy is one of an important factors to help students successfully learn the language. It deals with Abhakorn (2008) that learning strategies are one of the determining variables that have a profound effect on how learners approach in language learning and learning strategies are essential for teachers and learners in acquiring foreign languages. Oxford (2003) claims that learning strategies make learning easier, faster, more fun, more independent, more effective, and more diverted to new situations. It is also supported by many studies that the use of language learning strategies may affect the ability of the students in foreign languages especially in English language skills. It is related to a study conducted by Ou-chun (2011) who found that EFL students' language learning strategies have a significant relationship with their English proficiency. This means that using language learning strategies can help students to achieve their goals of getting English well.

Based on the interviews with teachers and students at SMP Nurul Iman Palembang, many students encountered many difficulties in writing, especially in writing descriptive text. They still seem confused about what they should write and how they should organize in their writings. This happened because they had so many things to write, but were unable to express their ideas in written form well. In addition, the students also have low ability in grammar, so it makes their writings difficult to understand. Then, there are some students also had difficulties to start their writing because they just translated their thoughts from their native language into English. They did not know what kind of tenses were used in descriptive text.

In relation to the above problem, this study is aimed at helping students improve their ability to write using the PLEASE strategy and define language learning strategies that make students learn easier, faster, more fun, more independent and more effective. In PLEASE strategy, students should consider who will read their writing select the appropriate topic begin collecting data about what they will write and start their writing activities.

## Literature Review

### *Language learning strategy*

Macaro (2011) defines a language learning strategy as what learners engage in learning that involves behavior and thoughts. So, it can be said that language learning strategy is a step or action consciously chosen by learners. Furthermore, Oxford (1990) defines comprehensively about language learning strategies as a specific action, behavior, step or technique that students use to improve their own progress in developing skills in the acquisition of a second or foreign language. This strategy can facilitate students taking or using a new language. Based on some of the above explanation, it can be concluded that the definition of language learning strategy is not only as a tool to help students learn the language, but also used as a tool to serve many other purposes both in learning and using second language by understanding about learning strategy in directing students to get their target language.

### *Types of language learning strategy*

Linguists distinguish the categorization of learning strategies into several types. O'Malley and Chamot (1995) defines learning strategies into three types; metacognitive, cognitive, and social-affective strategies.

a. Metacognitive

This strategy involves processes such as planning for learning, thinking about their learning process, self-correcting, and evaluating learning after the activities are completed. An example of this strategy is planning and self-monitoring.

b. Cognitive

This strategy involves the process of learning directly about the learning material itself and has limited certain learning tasks. An example of this strategy is repetition and conclusion.

c. Social Affective

This strategy has a close relationship with social activities and interacts with others. An example of this strategy is social-affective cooperation in questioning for clarification.

### *The concept of teaching*

Teaching means helping and sharing knowledge to others and can also provide information to do something. Brown (2007) defined teaching as showing or helping someone to learn how to do something, give instruction, guide in study something, give knowledge, cause to know or understand. Teaching can also be interpreted by facilitating the students to be able to learn the material. Then, Brown (2000) states that teaching is guiding and facilitating for learning, setting conditions for learning. Teaching also provides some information from the subject to the students in the classroom.

Etymologically, the word learning is translated as "instruction". The word learning itself is the development of the term teaching and learning or teaching process that has long been used in formal education (school). Substitution of the term from "teaching and learning activities" to "learning", of course not just change name or term, but also accompanied by the development of way of view of the meaning or paradigm contained therein. The term learning is used today as the development of the term teaching-learning, which is much influenced by the flow of holistic cognitive psychology. In essence, learning activities put students as a source of learning activities.

### *The Concept of Writing*

Writing is a very complex communication process that includes both cognitive and metacognitive elements. Richardson and Morgan (2003) state that writing is the most complex communication process activity in communicative art. Similarly, Negari (2011) states writing is a

complex process involving a number of cognitive and metacognitive elements, for example; brainstorming, planning, outlining, drafting and revision. From that view, it can be assumed that writing is not only complicated but also difficult to teach where we need to master grammatical and other components. Furthermore, Harmer (2004) states that writing has mechanical components like other skills such as: handwriting, spelling, punctuation, and good sentence patterns, paragraphs, and texts. Teachers who teach writing are aware that students must have qualified mastery of the intended component before moving on to the writing process itself.

In addition, there are several components of the writing process proposed by Clark (2007). Prewriting, at this stage, the author generates ideas, brainstorming topics, web ideas together, or talking or thinking about ideas. The teacher explains that students can get to write ideas from personal experiences, stories, pictures, magazines, newspapers, television, and various other sources. Then, drafting, students start to place their ideas on paper. In writing activities at this stage, students need to keep in mind the genre or format, reader, and purpose. Revising, revisions are seen in the organization and structure of writing. When revising, students analyze their writing in the form of sorting words, descriptive language in science fiction, topic sentences and supporting details in a persuasive essay. In the process of editing, see the writing mechanism. Thus, students can understand what is done in both activities. Publishing, at this stage, the teacher allows students to appreciate the results of their hard work. At this stage, students are ready to produce final copies, which can be handwritten or typed on a word processor. Reflecting, at this stage is a key element in the writing process. This encourages writers to think about their writing. Reflection also allows authors to look back at brainstorming and early writing activities to see if the original purpose is met.

### ***The concept of PLEASE strategy***

PLEASE Strategy is one of the mnemonic strategies that provides students with a roadmap to write a paragraph. Welch (1992) assumes PLEASE strategy is used as a management strategy in solving problems in writing paragraphs Steps in the PLEASE strategy as described by Akincilar (2010). They are: choose topics, readers and paragraph types, list your ideas on the topic, evaluate your list, enable paragraphs with topic sentences, provide supporting sentences and end with closing sentences and evaluate your writing.

PLEASE strategy can help to improve students' writing skills especially in writing a paragraph. This strategy can be used not only in writing descriptive text but also essays. This strategy helps students to start writing and help them to write step by step until they finish writing descriptive text. In applying PLEASE strategy, students should know who will read their writing and select appropriate topics and begin collecting data or information about what they will write and start writing them.

### ***Teaching procedure using PLEASE strategy***

Graham and Harris (2007) mentions several teaching steps writing using the PLEASE strategy as follows:

- Step 1. Pick : The first step of mnemonic is to remind the students about the topic, the reader and the type of paragraph they are going to write.
- Step 2. List : The second step is to remind students to create a list of ideas they will write.
- Step 3. Evaluate : At this stage, students evaluate their list to see if the stages are complete or need additional ideas.
- Step 4. Activate : The students activate the paragarap by composing the topic sentence.

- Step 5. Supply : Students give sentences to support topic sentences using the topic of ideas. They are expected to turn their ideas into sentences and describe their ideas appropriately.
- Step 6. End : The last step of mnemonic is to remind students to end their writing with conclusions. Students are expected to evaluate their work by revising their ideas and correcting the mistakes they make.

## Methodology

### Research design

This research is a class experiment research. In this study, classes were divided into two groups: experimental groups who were taught by PLEASE strategy and control groups who taught by teacher strategy. In the control class, they were only given pretest and posttest. Then, in conducting my research activities, all population were given a questionnaire to determine the categories of students' language learning strategies. The result of category analysis of students' learning strategy is divided into five categories: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive and social-affective.

In this study, a factorial design was used. Fraenkel and Wallen (1990) states that a factorial design is an experimental design that includes two or more independent variable groups (at least one manipulated variable) to see the effects of the variables and the interaction effects of one with the other against the dependent variable. The diagram of the factorial design can be illustrated in the following table.

**Table 1.** Diagram dari factorial design

Experimental	R	O <sub>1</sub>	X <sub>1</sub>	Y <sub>1,2,3,4,5</sub>	O <sub>2</sub>
control	R	O <sub>1</sub>	-	Y <sub>1,2,3,4,5</sub>	O <sub>2</sub>
Experimental	R	O <sub>1</sub>	X <sub>1</sub>	Y <sub>1,2,3,4,5</sub>	O <sub>2</sub>
Control	R	O <sub>1</sub>	-	Y <sub>1,2,3,4,5</sub>	O <sub>2</sub>

Note:

- R : Random Sampling Technique  
 O<sub>1</sub> : Pre-test  
 O<sub>2</sub> : Post-test  
 X<sub>1</sub> : Teaching Descriptive Writing Using PLEASE  
 Y<sub>1</sub> : Memory Language Learning Strategy  
 Y<sub>2</sub> : Cognitive Language Learning Strategy  
 Y<sub>3</sub> : Compensation Language Learning Strategy  
 Y<sub>4</sub> : Metacognitive Language Learning Strategy  
 Y<sub>5</sub> : Social Language Learning Strategy

### Research site, sampling, and participats

Frankel, Wallen and Hyun (2012) state that the population is a group where the reseracher will describe the results of the research. In this study, the population was all the eighth grade students of SMP Nurul Iman Palembang in academic year of 2016/2017. There were 150 students consisting of 77 males and 72 female students. In this study, two stage cluster random sampling technique was used. Questionnaires on student language learning strategies were given to all population to determine the number of samples. Then, each class was taken randomly consisting of 3 students for the memory, 3 students for the cognitive, 3 students for the compensation, 3 students for the metacognitive, 3 students for affective and 3 students for the social category. There were 18 students based on each category for each class taken as a sample

of the study, so the total sample used in this study were 72 students. Furthermore, the sample was divided into two groups. The first group is the experimental class group who were taught descriptive writing by using PLEASE strategy with 36 students consisting of: 6 students in memory, 6 students in cognitive, 6 students in compensation, 6 students in metacognitive, 6 students in affective and 6 students in social language learning strategies. Then, the second group was the control class group who were taught by using teacher's strategy consisting of 36 students: 6 students in memory, 6 students in cognitive, 6 students in compensation, 6 students in metacognitive, 6 students in affective and 6 students in social language learning strategies.

### ***Data collection***

In collecting the data, test and questionnaire were used. Descriptive writing test was given to the experiment and control groups. The experimental group who were taught descriptive writing using PLEASE strategy. While, the second group is a control group who were taught descriptive writing using teacher's strategy. There are two test given. They are (pretest) given before treatment is given and (posttest) is given after the treatment.

Then, questionnaires was provided to classify the students' categories in language learning strategies into five types; memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, and social strategies. There are 50 items of questions with five categories of assessment including: (a) the memory strategy is an effective way of remembering, (b) the cognitive strategy is to use mental processes, (c) the compensation strategy is used to see lost knowledge compensation, (d) strategy metacognitive is to organize and evaluate learning, and (e) social strategy is related to learning with others. In answer to the question in the questionnaire, five choices of answers are given to the students (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = average, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). In choosing the answer, students were asked to choose one option according to the questions given in the questionnaire where the students were given 25 minutes to complete all the questions in the questionnaire.

### ***Data analysis***

#### ***Validity and reliability***

Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun (2012) assume validity test as the suitability and accuracy of research data used valid or not. In conducting validity test, there are three types of validity tests conducted namely the validity test construct, the test item question, and the content validity test. Hughes (1989) states that tests are said to have a construct of validity when measuring what should be measured. Furthermore, Sugiyono (2010) states that to measure the construct of the validity, expert judgments is necessarily used to measure the construct validity test. The construct validity test provides an assessment of the instruments in pretest, posttest and lesson plan which were used in this research activities. In construct validity test, an assessment of three validators to assess whether or not a research instrument can be used or not in this study. Three validators were lecturers who teach writing in English Education Program of State Islamic University of Raden Fatah Palembang.

Hughes (1989) states that tests are said to have content validity if they are representative samples of language skills, structures. There are two content validity tests conducted by the researcher. First is the content validity test of the pretest and posttest questions used in the study to assess whether the content of the test has content validity or not, the skill or structure specification must be made based on the curriculum and syllabus. Then, the results of the analysis in making the validity of the content are presented in the test table of the specification including: basic competence, subject matter/discussion, indicator, item test number, total question, test type and answer key. Then, a second validity test was performed on the

questionnaire used in the study. To facilitate the understanding of the contents of the questionnaires used in the study, 50 items of questionnaire were translated into Indonesian. Then the translation results were validated to the validators to see if the contents of the questionnaire that has been translated in accordance with existing content was standard or not.

Fraenkel and Wallen (1990) state that the reliability test is used to measure the consistency of two values obtained for each individual from one administration of another instrument and from one set of other items. According to Cohen et al. (2007), reliability in quantitative research is essentially a synonym for dependability, consistency and replicability over time, over instruments and over groups of respondents (as cited in Putra and Marzulina, 2015).

Then, Fraenkel and Wallen (1990) suggest that scores are considered reliable if the significance score is at least or higher than 0.70. In conducting reliability test, inter-rater reliability test was done by using Spearman Rank Order. In this test, the result of the students' writing achievement was evaluated by three assessors (raters) with the assessment component of the students' descriptive writing (scoring rubrics). From the inter-rater reliability test results, it was obtained that the p-output (0.78) was higher than (0.70). It was assumed that this research instrument was categorized reliable.

### ***Normality test***

Normality test is used to measure whether the data obtained is normal or not. Data can be stated normal if the p-output is higher than 0.05. In measuring the normality test, 1-sample Kolmogorov Smirnov was used. The normality test was used to measure the questionnaire on students' learning learning strategy and students' descriptive writing achievement including pretest and posttest scores in experimental and control classes. After conducting the test, the result showed that the data in pretest and posttest were considered normal for both control (pretest: 0.113; posttest: 0.797) and experimental group (pretest: 0.851; posttest: 0.394).

### ***Homogeneity test***

Homogeneity test is used to measure the scores obtained whether homogeneous or not. Basrowi (2007) states that scores are categorized homogeneous if p-output is higher than the mean significant difference level at 0.05. In measuring homogeneity test, Levene Statistics was used. Homogeneity test was used to measure the questionnaire on students' language learning strategies and students' descriptive writing achievement including pretest and posttest scores in experimental and control classes. The results of homogeneity test showed that the data were considered homogeneous for both control group (0.395) and experimental group (0.111).

## **Findings and Discussions**

### ***The result analysis of measuring significant improvement on students' descriptive writing achievement taught using PLEASE strategy***

From the result analysis of measuring significant improvement on students' descriptive writing who were taught by PLEASE strategy using paired-sample test, it showed that the result of the p-output (0.000) is lower than the significant level at 0.05. From that result, it can be assumed that there is a significant improvement on students' descriptive writing achievement before and after being taught using PLEASE strategy. The result analysis of significant improvement on students' descriptive writing achievement taught using PLEASE strategy was displayed in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Result analysis of significant improvement using paired sample test

		Paired Samples Test					T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Paired Differences							
Pair	SCORE – DATA	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
1		54,40278	18,92287	2,23008	49,95612	58,84943	24,395	71	,000

### ***Measuring significant improvement on students' descriptive writing in poor category taught using teacher strategy***

From the result analysis of measuring significant improvement on students' descriptive writing achievement in poor category taught by teacher strategy using paired-sample test, it was found that p-output (0.000) less than the significance level at 0.05. From the result, it can be assumed that there is a significant improvement in students' descriptive writing achievement in poor categories before and after being taught with teacher strategy. The result analysis of significant improvement on students' descriptive writing achievement in poor category taught using teacher strategy was displayed in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Result analysis of significant improvement using paired sample test

		Paired Samples Test					T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Paired Differences							
Pair	SCORE – DATA	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
1		33,9714	8,08465	,96630	32,0437	35,8991	35,15	69	,000

### ***Measuring significant difference on students' descriptive writing achievement taught using PLEASE and teacher strategies***

From the analysis of significant difference on students' descriptive writing achievement taught using PLEASE and teacher strategy using independent-sample test, it was found that the p-output (0.013) greater than the significance level at 0,05. From that score, it can be assumed that there is no significant difference on students' descriptive writing achievement taught using PLEASE and teacher strategies, in other words, it can be stated that significant difference between teaching descriptive writing taught using PLEASE and teacher strategies was not found. The result analysis of significant difference on students' descriptive writing achievement taught using PLEASE and teacher strategy was displayed in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Result analysis of significant difference using independent sample test

		Independent Samples Test	
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means



**Table 6.** Result analysis of significant influence using one-way ANOVA

ANOVA					
SCORE					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	88439,065	2	44219,532	4624,903	,000
Within Groups	659,721	69	9,561		
Total	89098,786	71			

***Measuring significant influence on language learning strategy towards students' descriptive writing achievement taught using PLEASE strategy***

From the result analysis of the influence on language learning strategy towards students' descriptive writing achievement taught by PLEASE strategy using one-way ANOVA, it was found that the p-output (0.115) greater than the level of significance level at 0.05. From that score, it can be assumed that significant influence on language learning strategy towards students' descriptive writing achievement taught using PLEASE strategy was not found. The result analysis of significant influence on language learning strategy towards students' descriptive writing achievement taught using PLEASE strategy was displayed in Table 7.

**Table 7.** Result analysis of significant influence using one-way ANOVA

ANOVA					
Ss_Scores					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1,855	5	,371	1,955	,115
Within Groups	5,695	30	,190		
Total	7,550	35			

***Measuring the interaction effects of language learning strategies towards students' descriptive writing achievement taught using PLEASE and teacher strategies***

From the result analysis of interaction effects between language learning strategy toward students' descriptive writing achievement taught by PLEASE and teacher strategy using two-ways ANOVA, it showed that the p-output (0,430) is bigger than the significance level at 0,05. From the score, it can be assumed that there is no interaction effect between language learning strategy towards students' descriptive writing achievement taught using PLEASE and teacher strategies. The result analysis of interaction effect of language learning strategy towards students' descriptive writing achievement taught using PLEASE and teacher strategy was displayed in Table 8.

**Table 8.** Result analysis of interaction effect using two-ways ANOVA

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Dependent Variable: Ss_Scores					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	2,465 <sup>a</sup>	11	,224	1,517	,149
Intercept	715,067	1	715,067	4839,655	,000

LLS	1,618	5	,324	2,190	,067
WritingStrategies	,001	1	,001	,008	,931
LLS *	,733	5	,147	,992	,430
WritingStrategies					
Error	8,865	60	,148		
Total	956,730	72			
Corrected Total	11,330	71			
a. R Squared = ,218 (Adjusted R Squared = ,074)					

## Conclusion

From the findings above, some conclusions can be drawn as follows. First, the result analysis of measuring significant improvement on students' descriptive writing taught using PLEASE strategy using paired-sample test showed that a significant improvement on students' descriptive writing achievement before and after being taught using PLEASE strategy was found. It can be concluded that alternative hypothesis is accepted and null hypothesis is rejected. Second, the result analysis of measuring significant improvement on students' descriptive writing achievement in poor category taught by teacher strategy using paired-sample test was found. Therefore, it can be concluded that alternative hypothesis is accepted and null hypothesis is rejected.

Third, the analysis of measuring significant difference on students' descriptive writing achievement taught using PLEASE and teacher strategy using independent-sample test was not found. This means that alternative hypothesis is rejected and null hypothesis is accepted. Fourth, the next analysis of measuring significant difference on students' descriptive writing achievement in very good and fair categories taught by PLEASE strategy using independent-sample test was not found. This result suggests that alternative hypothesis is rejected and null hypothesis is accepted.

Fifth, the result analysis on the influence of language learning strategy towards students' descriptive writing achievement in very good and fair categories using one-way ANOVA was found. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is accepted and null hypothesis is rejected. Sixth, the result analysis of measuring the influence of language learning strategy towards students' descriptive writing achievement taught by PLEASE strategy using one-way ANOVA was not found. So, it can be concluded that alternative hypothesis is rejected and null hypothesis is accepted. And the last analysis of measuring the interaction effects between language learning strategy toward students' descriptive writing achievement taught by PLEASE and teacher strategy using two-ways ANOVA was not found. Thus, it can be concluded that alternative hypothesis is rejected and null hypothesis is accepted.

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