

## ARTIKEL

### **IMPROVING STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPH THROUGH SIMULTANEOUS ROUNDTBLE STRATEGY**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

This study attempts to improve students' achievement in writing descriptive paragraph through simultaneous roundtable strategy. This study was conducted by using classroom action research. The subject of the research was class VIII-5 SMP N 2 Berastagi consisting of 30 students. The research was conducted in two cycles and consisted of seven meetings. The instruments for collecting data were writing tests as the quantitative data and diary notes, observation sheet, and questionnaire sheet as qualitative data. Based on the writing score, students' scores kept improving in every test. In the first cycle test, the mean of writing score was 61,43. In the second cycle test the mean of writing score was 75,13. Based on diary notes, observation sheet and questionnaire sheet, it was found that students were actively involved in writing process. The result of the research showed that Simultaneous Roundtable Strategy can improve students' achievement in writing descriptive paragraph.

*Keywords: Simultaneous Roundtable, Writing, Dscriptive Paragraph, Action research*

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **The Background of the Study**

English is an international language that is used all over the world. It is important for people to master English in oral and written form, in order to be able to communicate and socialize with the world community. Since learning English is becoming more and more important nowadays, it has been introduced as the foreign language taught in every school in Indonesia.

Teaching English will be related to four skills, they are: listening skill, speaking skill, reading skill and writing skill. Reading and listening have many parallels and are referred to the receptive skills, while speaking and writing are referred to the productive skills. However, productive skills are found more difficult to be achieved by the students, that there are a number of reasons why students find language production difficult (Harmer, 2001:251).

Writing is one of the most powerful communication tools used today and for the rest of our life. Writing is a process of transforming thoughts and ideas into written form. Writing is not only a process of linking words into sentences or paragraphs, but it is a sequence or steps of ideas, organized thoughts and feeling in the form of words and combined into sentences into form of paragraphs in which every sentences is closely related one another.

The ability to communicate successfully through writing is an essential life skill. Students are expected to write effectively for a variety of reasons. National educational curriculum now requires that students know and understand the basic types of writing and their essential components.

However, writing skill is more complex and difficult to teach, requiring the mastery not only the grammatical and theoretically devices but also the conceptual and

judgment. For many English learners, learning to write fluently in English is much more challenging and difficult than learning to speak fluently. Writing is much more formal than speaking and it allows no mistakes. Learning to write is difficult especially for those who write in a second or foreign language; they must write accurately within a limited time (Khoii, 2011). If the English teacher tries to enable students to produce fluent, accurate and appropriate written English, there are a number of aspects which need to be considered (mechanics of writing, accuracy, fluency, etc).

Based on the practice teaching experience at SMPN 2 Berastagi, the same problem was also found. In writing a descriptive paragraph, the students got confused of what to write and how to start. Most of them also did not have any ideas what grammar to use or how to organize the ideas.

Based on the data got by observing in SMP Negeri 2 Berastagi, the Minimum Competence Criteria (Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal: KKM) is 70. From 30 students in second year, there are 23 students got scores lower than 70 and there are 7 students got higher than 70. It means that only 23% of students have already achieved the competence.

One of the texts which students must learn and produce in the eighth grade is descriptive text. It is a kind of text which is aimed to describe a particular person, place, or thing. It is expected to make the readers feel, hear, see, smell, and taste things as the writer expects. It also invites the readers to enjoy and fully understand the object explained.

Related to the problem mentioned previously, the way of teaching needs to be improved. There are many strategies in improving the way of teaching. However, it is determined to apply Simultaneous Roundtable Strategy in this study.

Simultaneous Roundtable Strategy is one of cooperative learning strategies that allow students to work in small groups or in pairs to actively engage in the learning process and improve their understanding of the content. Each member of the team is not only responsible for their own learning, but also for helping teammates learn.

By using Simultaneous Roundtable Strategy in teaching writing descriptive paragraph, the students are expected to be able to describe a thing by their own words and apply it to their lives in the real world. In teams, students simultaneously generate responses, then pass their list or product clockwise so each teammate can add to the prior responses (Kagan, 1998:9). Within the simultaneous roundtable strategy, students collaborate; working together to add some comments/thinking to write a descriptive paragraph.

Therefore, the problem of the study is *“Does the use of simultaneous roundtable strategy significantly improve students’ achievement in writing descriptive paragraph?”*

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

This study applied classroom action research. It is essential that the researcher applies the blind sequencing strategy regularly and continuously. The researcher wants to explain the process of practicing the strategy which is done to students in each meeting, instead of just seeing the results of students writing.

Action research is subsequently described as a way of developing classroom practice which leads to staff development having a greater impact on students’ learning experiences, (McNiff, 1993:69). It is an important tool to generate creative and sustainable improvements in schools. It can be engaged by a single teacher, by a group of colleagues who share an interest in a common problem, or by the entire faculty of a school.

These teachers have not only carried out development work for their schools but have also broadened their knowledge and their professional competency. They have passed on this knowledge to colleagues, students, parents and, in written form, also to the wider public. They have shown that teachers can make an important contribution to the knowledge base of their profession. And they have demonstrated that they can engage successfully with professional problems without recourse to external direction. They did not restrict their work to adopting a set of practical routines, but acted as professionals

precisely in developing new theories about their practice, including a critique of its educational and social contexts.

The thought of the terms 'action' and 'research' highlights the essential feature of the approach: trying out ideas in practice as a means of improvement and as a means of increasing knowledge about the curriculum, teaching and learning. Action research is seen as an approach for groups of educational practitioners, students, parents and others to live with the complexity of real experience while at the same time striving for concrete improvement. So, action research is an approach used to improve education by changing it and learning from consequences of changes.

Improving education means improving our educational discourse, educational practice and improving form of educational organization. It means changing people (their ideas, activities and their social relationship). Change is a process not a product. To sustain the improvement, changes in language and discourse, activities and practices and social relationship and form organization will be monitored and in the light of reflection on the tentative products of changes achieved so far, steer out next steps in the continuing process of changes. It is concluded that action research is learning by doing. It is about changes, observing their consequences, evaluating them critically and modifying plans for continuing improvement in the light of what has been learned through observation.

The action researcher will carry out of the four activities collaboratively, involving others affected by the action.

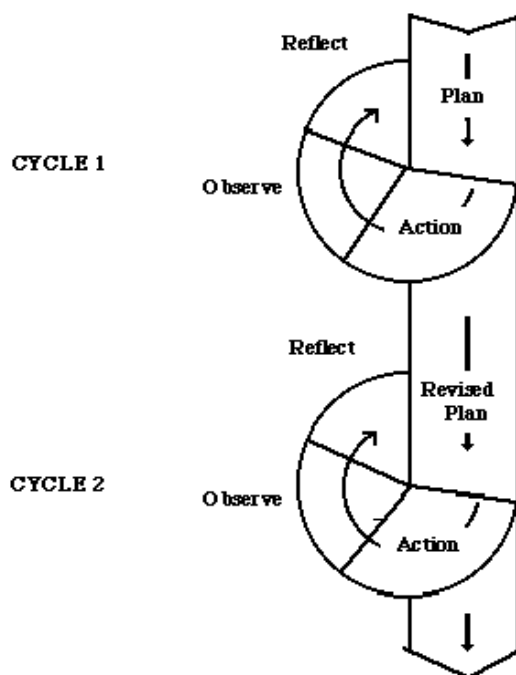
The subject of this research was students of class VIII-5 SMP Negeri 2 Berastagi academic year 2012/2013. The number of the student in this class was 30 students which consist of 15 male students and 15 female students.

In this study, the data are collected by qualitative and quantitative approach. In this research, qualitative and quantitative data is collected. The qualitative data is conducted to know the situation during the teaching process and the quantitative data is used to analyze the students' score.

In collecting the quantitative data, writing test is conducted to the students based on the evaluation of the components of the writing test, such as: content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. The students are asked to write a descriptive paragraph through Simultaneous Roundtable Strategy.

While, in collecting the qualitative data, questionnaire, observation sheet and diary notes are used. Questionnaire and observation sheet are used to identify the problem of the study. Observation focuses on what happening the classroom, and diary notes is used to know all things that contained personal evaluation.

The procedure of the data collection is conducted by administrating two cycles. The first cycle is conducted in four meetings and the second cycle is conducted in three meetings, so there are seven meetings all together. In conducting this research, there are four steps that are included such as; planning, action, observation and reflection in each cycle.



**Action Research Protocol after Kemmis (cited in Hopkins, 1985)**

The quantitative data is analyzed by computing the score of writing test. The components for scoring writing test are content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanism.

The mean of the students' score for each cycle is obtained by using the application of the following formula:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N} \times 100\%$$

Where:

$\bar{X}$

= the mean of the students' score

$\sum X$  = the total score

N = the number of the students

The Minimum Completeness Criteria (Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal: KKM) was 70 in SMP Negeri 2 Berastagi. To categorize the number of the students who are competent in descriptive writing, the following formula is applied:

$$P \equiv \frac{R}{T} \times 100 \%$$

Where:

P = the percentage of those who get point up to 70

R = the number of those who got point up to 70

T = the total number of the students.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Data**

This research involved quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data was obtained from writing test, and the qualitative data was obtained from the diary notes,

questionnaire sheet, and observation sheet. The data were taken from a class which consisted of 30 students, 15 male and 15 female students.

Because the data was not significantly improved in one cycle, the researcher had to conduct the next cycle. So, this research was accomplished in two cycles, which first cycle was conducted in four meetings, the second cycle was conducted in three meetings, so there were seven meetings include pre test.

#### *The quantitative data*

The quantitative data were taken from the result of some competence tests during the seven meeting research. The first competence test, pre test, was given in the first meeting and the other tests, post test I and post test II, were given in the end of each cycle.

The data showed that there was a continuous improvement of the students' score. The improvement of the students' score in writing descriptive paragraph by applying Simultaneous Roundtable Strategy can be seen in the table 4.2, and the calculation can be seen in appendix B.

#### *The qualitative data*

The qualitative data were taken from the diary notes, observation sheet, and questionnaire sheet. The diary notes showed that the students interested to learn writing descriptive paragraph through Simultaneous Roundtable Strategy, which can be seen in appendix C.

The observation sheet showed how students react, active / inactive, while doing the group discussion in the first cycle. It can be seen in appendix D. Last, the questionnaire sheet showed that the students could expand their ideas in writing after applying Simultaneous Roundtable Strategy and interested to write by applying that strategy.

### **The Data Analysis**

#### *Analysis of quantitative data*

The students' score improved from the pretest to the last competence test. It can be seen in the table 4.1 below.



**Table 4.1 The Scores of the Students in Three Competence Tests**

No.	Name of the Students	Pre Test	Post Test I	Post Test II
1	AH	51	62	72
2	ART	43	52	73
3	AF	61	67	80
4	AP	57	70	82
5	AR	56	65	74
6	AF	59	68	77
7	AS	38	50	75
8	BU	41	64	73
9	CH	47	60	77
10	DSP	67	71	80
11	FK	39	78	83
12	FG	46	55	68
13	GSS	47	63	72
14	HS	67	77	85
15	IA	42	72	82
16	JF	68	79	89
17	MK	44	53	72
18	M	38	58	72
19	NL	40	50	71
20	NA	40	52	67

21	NA	43	58	71
22	NM	39	46	66
23	PBK	45	60	72
24	RKK	41	65	76
25	RS	44	58	73
26	SA	47	56	72
27	TS	52	60	77
28	TW	53	68	76
29	WA	40	50	72
30	AA	47	56	75
$\sum X$		1442	1843	2254
$\bar{X}$		48.06	61.43	75.13

The improvement of the students' score in writing descriptive paragraph through Simultaneous Roundtable Strategy can also be seen from the average of the students' score in the pre test up to post test II. The average of post test II was the highest one among the other tests.

The students' score in those three tests were variative. In the pre test, the lowest score was 38 and the highest was 67. In the post test I, the lowest score was 46 and the highest one was 79. In the post test II, the lowest score was 66 and the highest one was 89. The comparison of the students' score in the writing competence tests can be seen in the table 4.2 below.

**Table 4.2 Comparison of the Students' Scores in Three Competence Tests**

Names of Test	Test I (pre test)	Test II	Test III
Lowest Score	38	46	66

Highest Score	67	79	89
$\bar{X}$	52.5	62.5	77.5
N	30	30	30

Where:  $\bar{X}$  = Mean

$N$  = Number of students

The data from the table concluded that the students' achievement on writing descriptive paragraph through Simultaneous Roundtable Strategy had improved from 48.06 to 75.13. The calculation can be seen in appendix B.

The students would pass the standard or mastered the subject if they got score above 70. So, the improvement of students' score from the first meeting to the last meeting could be seen from the percentage of students who got the score above 70. It can be seen in the table 4.3 below.

**Table 4.3 The Percentage of Students who Got Point up to 70**

Competence Test	Percentage
1 <sup>st</sup>	0%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	20 %
3 <sup>rd</sup>	90 %

In the first competence test, pre test, was 0% (no student) who got point up to 70. The second competence test was 20% (six students) who got points up to 70. In the third competence test, there was 90% (twenty seven students) who got point up to 70. There was an improvement about 70% from the second competence test to the third, and about 90% from the first competence test to the third. The calculation can be seen in appendix C. Furthermore, the data concluded that all students' descriptive writing score had improved from the first competence test (pre test) to the last competence test through Simultaneous Roundtable Strategy. It was described as follows.

The improvement of the students' score was so variative, but most of them have almost same ability in writing descriptive paragraph. The average of the score improvement was 26.2. There was one student who got the improvement of

score (44), which was the highest score improvement. His score increased in every test. He was active in asking to the researcher about something that he didn't know. He worked cooperatively his group and he was good in doing individual writing. There were three students got a significant score improvement, the rest got predictable improvement though there were three students who weren't able to pass the KKM. There was one student got the lowest score improvement (13), but she passed the KKM with score (80). It could happen because she had well descriptive paragraph understanding before the application of the strategy, which was shown by his score in the first test (67). Most of the students got low score in the pre test because they didn't understand clearly what descriptive paragraph is. Eventhough they got low score in the pre test, all of them were able to improve thier own in last two test.

Based on the data analysis, it concluded that all students got improvement on their score. There were high and low improvements.

#### *Analysis of qualitative data*

The qualitative data were taken from the diary notes, observation sheet, and questionnaire sheet. Those are gained within two cycles.

The first cycle was conducted for four meetings. In this cycle, the pre test was given to know the basic skills of the students in writing, especially in writing descriptive paragraph. The pre testfound that the students had some difficulties to write their ideas into sentences because they didn't have good vocabulary ability.

All activities were observed by the collaborator in the classroom (see appendix E) as follows.

The students were divided into seven groups. One group consisted of four to five students. In discussing, some of groups were serious and some of themwere not. Since they had already got some ideas which relate to the picture/situation researcher gave, they became so active in adding information to their friends' writing. But some of them still found difficulties in doing it well.

When they were asked to write individually, some students found difficulties in finding the words they need to write. Some of them had the dictionary and looked up in it, and the others kept asking the researcher about the vocabularies and words translation. After finished the writing, the researcher gave review about the process of writing that they could explain the details from the pictures/situation to produce more ideas.

Based on the reflection from the first cycle, the second cycle had to be conducted, which was expected to be better than the first cycle. All the activities were observed by the collaborator as follows.

In the second cycle, before the group discussion was started, the teacher asked them to explain what they wanted to get after the meeting. Then, they started the activities and tried to share the information related to their friends' object. They also helped their friends who did not know how to explain the details. One of the groups did not do the strategy correctly, so the researcher had to explain the rule again. The students enjoyed the activity, and luckily the result of the writing was quite good, because the students did it seriously more than what they did in the first cycle.

In this cycle, the students were interested in writing and actively asking the words translation and vocabularies about the object/situation researcher gave. They were already able to find the important details on the situation that helped them to add some supporting ideas to each part of their text. It was just few students who couldn't arrange the text into correct organization of text. However, most of them had understood well and produced a good descriptive text.

### **Research Findings**

The finding of this research was that Simultaneous Roundtable Strategy was able to improve the students' achievement on writing descriptive paragraph. The data proved that the average of the students' score improved in every test. In the last competence test, the average was 75.13. It was higher than the second competence test, 61.43 and the first competence test, 48.06.

Diary notes, observation sheet and questionnaire sheet supported that Simultaneous Roundtable Strategy was able to improve the students' achievement

on writing descriptive paragraph. It was shown by the students' comments and attitude toward writing descriptive paragraph. They were enthusiastic in doing that and didn't extend any errors in the every meeting. They were interested to write descriptive paragraph after applying Simultaneous Roundtable Strategy. Finally, the questionnaire sheet showed that the application of simultaneous Roundtable Strategy made them feel more enjoyable in writing, especially descriptive paragraph.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **Conclusion**

The data concluded that the students' writing score improved from the first cycle to the second cycle. It means that there was an improvement on the students' achievement on writing descriptive paragraph test by applying Simultaneous Roundtable Strategy. The analysis of quantitative data stated the scores improvement from the first test to the last test eventually. Furthermore, the improvement was also proved by the observation sheet, questionnaire sheet and diary notes which indicate to the improvement in learning result by applying Simultaneous Roundtable Strategy in teaching and learning process from the first cycle to the second cycle. Therefore, Simultaneous Roundtable Strategy significantly improves the students' achievement on writing descriptive paragraph.

### **Suggestions**

The result of this study shows that the use of Simultaneous Roundtable Strategy improved the students' achievement on writing descriptive paragraph. These following suggestions are offered:

1. For the English teachers; it is better to use Simultaneous Roundtable Strategy in teaching writing because this strategy helps teachers in monitoring and encouraging the students to start writing by highlighting related words so that the students can expand the ideas easily.
2. For the students; it is suggested to be more confidence in exploring their ability in writing. They should not be worried to make mistakes in their writing

because they can learn something from mistakes. They should help their friends in group to find an appropriate sentence in order to produce a descriptive paragraph.

3. For all the readers; may this research can contribute a good understanding how to improve their achievement on writing descriptive paragraph through Simultaneous Roundtable Strategy.

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