

The Use of STAD to Improve Students' Writing Skill

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This study aims to know whether Student Team Achievement Division (STAD) can improve students' ability in writing descriptive text or not. To answer this research questions, the researchers applied experimental study. Two classes of the second-grade students in MTs (Islamic Junior Secondary School) Babun Najah were chosen as the sample of this study. In order to get the data, the test was used as the main research instrument. The researcher applied teaching writing descriptive text by using STAD in the experimental class. Based on the result, it was found that the t-test score of post-test in experimental and control groups is higher than the t-table score ($4.21 > 1.69$). This means that the alternate hypothesis was accepted or the implementation of STAD improves the students' ability in writing descriptive text. The findings also revealed that the writing component that had improved by using STAD is the *content* component. The students show more knowledgeable in their writing. In addition, through STAD the students had the opportunity to work together in a group to share and learn in order to produce good writing.

Keywords: STAD, writing ability, descriptive text

Tujuan penelitian ini melihat apakah Student Team Achievement Division (STAD) dapat meningkatkan kemampuan menulis deskriptif. Untuk menjawab pertanyaan ini, penelitian eksperimen dilakukan. Dua kelas di Madrasah Tsanawiyah Babun Najah dipilih sebagai sampel. Tes digunakan sebagai instrument penelitian utama, dengan pengajaran STAD digunakan di kelas eksperimen. Penemuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa post-test siswa di kedua kelompok (eksperimen dan kontrol) lebih tinggi dari nilai t-table ($4.21 > 1.69$). Ini menunjukkan STAD dapat meningkatkan kemampuan menulis deskriptif. Penemuan juga menunjukkan komponen menulis yang paling meningkat adalah content (isi). Pengetahuan siswa dalam menulis meningkat. Selain itu, STAD juga memberikan kesempatan kepada siswa untuk bekerjasama dalam kelompok.

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INTRODUCTION

English as a foreign language is taught from elementary up to university level in Indonesia. From the four skills in teaching English, writing is one of important skills that should be mastered by the students in every level of education in order to communicate in written form. The aim of teaching writing at junior high school level is to develop students' competence in expressing short and simple messages for interaction with people in their environment. It also aims to develop students' competence in writing various functional text types or genres which include descriptive, procedure, recount, narrative and report text (Depdiknas, 2006). This means that the students are able to communicate fluently in written form using appropriate and precise language. To use precise language in writing, the students should understand types of genre in writing, and to acquire writing ability the students should get sufficient writing practice. Without practice, it is impossible to write well.

Based on a preliminary study conducted at second-grade students of MTsS Babun Najah, it was discovered that most of the students have difficulties in writing. First, during the process of writing, most of the students find it difficult to develop ideas in their minds. This occurs as a result of having limited lexical resources. Actually, they might have something to state in their mind, but they are often confused to express and develop their ideas into a good writing. In addition, Chakraverty and Gautum (as cited in Budiarta, 2012) further explain that one of the students' problems is that they have difficulty in arranging information or ideas logically to achieve coherence in their writing, which is the foremost requirement in writing.

In order to engage in writing effectively, the students need to be equipped and trained with effective strategies to help them improve their writing ability. It is assumed that the use of Student Team Achievement Division (STAD) may overcome such problems mentioned above. STAD, according to Slavin (1990), is one of the many strategies in cooperative learning in which students are assigned to four-five member learning teams that are mixed in performance level, gender, and ethnicity. According to Budiarta (2012), STAD provides a great chance for the students to create creative writing since it provides a chance for the students to look at the progression of information or ideas in their writing. He conducted a study on the effect of STAD on the writing achievement of the tenth year students. The result shows that there was a significant difference in the students' writing achievement between the students who were taught by using STAD technique than that of the conventional technique. The mean score of students who were taught by using STAD (78.43) was higher than the mean score of students who were taught by conventional technique (76.14).

Miranty, Syafrri and Hadriana (2012) also conducted a similar study. She examined the effects of STAD in improving the students' ability in writing report text. The samples were the second year students of SMA Negeri (State Senior Secondary School) 2 Pekanbaru. The results of this action research indicated that the average score of the post-test was higher than the pre-test. It increased from 54.2 to 63.5 at first cycle and to 75.3 at the second cycle.

In this study, we attempt to find out if there is a significant improvement in the students' writing by using STAD and those who are taught by using the conventional method, and to know which writing component is better taught by using STAD. Consequently, based on research questions posed, the following hypotheses are formulated:

- Alternative Hypothesis (Ha): There was a significance improvement in the students' writing by using STAD
- Null Hypothesis (Ho): There was a significance improvement in the students' writing by using STAD

METHOD

To obtain the objectives of this study, an experimental study which used descriptive quantitative was applied as the methodology of this study. The true experimental design was utilized throughout this study. This research was conducted in MTsS Babun Najah Banda Aceh. Two classes at the second grade were selected randomly: one for experimental class and the other for control class. Each class consisted of 20 and 18 students respectively. Both groups were pre-tested. Then the experimental class was taught writing by using STAD, on the other hand, control class was taught writing using another technique. Finally, both groups received a post-test, which indicated the changes in their writing ability.

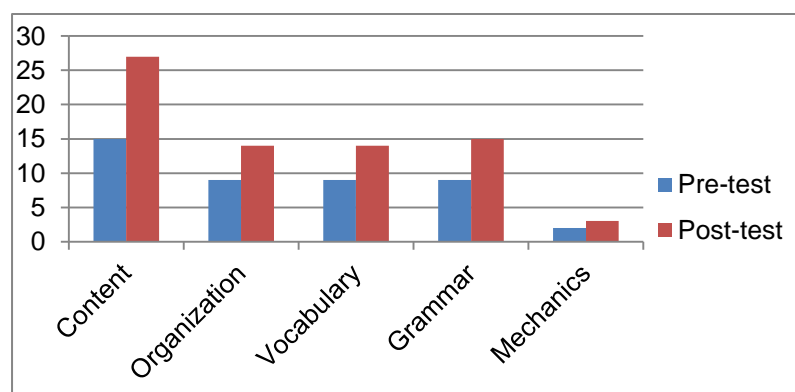
Test, including pre-test and post-test, was used as the main instrument. The test was used to get the data about the students' ability in writing. The students were asked to compose a short descriptive text in length of 50-60 words using the topic provided by the researcher. To analyze the data collected, the researcher employed the quantitative and qualitative analysis. The data analysis was conducted by organizing the data gained from pre-test and post-test. In scoring the students' writing paper, first, the researcher employed five categories of analytical scoring rubric as suggested by Heaton (1988) that are content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. Then, the students' writing scores were analyzed statistically.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The result showed that there was a significance progression between the students' pre-test and post-test scores in the experimental group after STAD was implemented. The mean score of pre-test in the experimental group was 45.33, whilst control group was 51.26. Furthermore, the mean score of post-test in the experimental group increased to 67.42 whilst for the control group it was 55.91. This indicates that the implementation of STAD was effective to improve the students' writing ability. For this reason, the hypothesis was supported by this finding that there was a significance improvement in the students' writing by using STAD.

The second research question is dealing with the kind of writing component that is better taught by STAD. The following figure outlines the improvement of writing aspects from pre-test to post-test in the experimental group.

Figure 1. The students' achievement in writing components of pre-test and post-test in the experimental group



The results show that there was a significant improvement in each aspect of writing. The writing component that had improved after the treatment is the *content* component. Most of the experimental students reached the level of excellent to very good (30-27) in their *content* in the post-test. By working in a group, the students could learn the material and share their knowledge about the content of the subject. The students became more knowledgeable of the content after the implementation of STAD technique in their writing.

CONCLUSIONS

By the implementation of STAD, the students could enhance their understanding with regard to writing descriptive text since by working cooperatively in teams, they could share ideas and learn how to be positively independent to each other in reaching the team goal. They become more active and enthusiastic during writing class. This technique can be one of the solutions for everyone especially for the students who have the problems with writing activities since many students spend a lot of time trying to come up with the topic they would like to write about and generating their ideas. Working cooperatively helps students who are getting stuck with the ideas of writing.

The component of writing that is better taught by STAD is the *content* component. Content is the idea of the main point in writing because without ideas there are not compositions or printed information. Most of the experimental students reached the level of excellent to very good (30-27) in their content especially in the post-test, after the implementation of STAD in teaching and learning writing. This means that the students have shown some knowledgeable and adequate range of subject matter. In the meantime at least it proves that teachers should not persist with methods that do not work but be open and ready to adapt and adopt the methods which emphasize more student-centeredness, such as STAD.

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