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## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING COMIC STRIPS TOWARD STUDENTS' WRITING ABILITY IN MAKING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this research is to find out the effectiveness of using comic strip toward writing ability in making descriptive text. The research belongs to experimental research. The population of this research is the eighth grade of SMPN 7 Ambon consisting 210 students. The researchers took 60 students as the samples and the samples were divided into control group (VIII 3) consists of 30 students and experimental group (VIII 2) consists of 30 students. The researchers conducted testing to get the data (pre-test and post-test) in control group and experimental group. The researchers used descriptive and inferential analysis to analyze the data. The descriptive analysis shows that the result of experimental group shows that in pre-test, the mean is 37.20, the standard deviation is 22.69, and the highest category belongs to very poor category with 53.3% (16 students). While in the post-test the mean is 60.60, the standard deviation is 27.47, and the highest category belongs to very good category with 30.0% (9 students). Meanwhile, the result of control group shows that in pre-test, the mean is 43.26, the standard deviation is 28.20, and the highest category belongs to very poor category with 40.0% (12 students). While in the post-test, the mean is 48.16, the standard deviation is 19.12, and the highest category belongs to fair category with 50.0% (15 students). It means the hypothesis is accepted. There is a significance difference between the students taught using comic strip in making descriptive and those taught without using comic strip in making descriptive text in the eighth grade of SMPN 7 Ambon.

**Keywords:** *Comic Strips; Descriptive Text; Writing Ability*

### **INTRODUCTION**

English becomes the most important language in the current situation. English is an international language in the world. People use English not only for communication, but also for building and maintaining relationships among them. People are expected to develop and improve their knowledge, science, technology, art, literature, and culture by learning English.

Releasing this need, English has become a major course in almost all countries in this world. In Indonesia, English has been decided as the national curriculum. English has become a course that is taught from elementary school until high school. In addition, English course institutions are established everywhere. Therefore, the students ought to master English well because English has become the international language or the foreign language in Indonesia.

In the English learning process, there are four essential skills that must be possessed by the students to master English well; reading, writing, listening, and speaking. One of the reasons behind the students' poor ability in mastering English is because the students do not master the four skills well. The problem possibly comes from the student or the teacher.

Actually, learning English is not easy. English learners in Indonesia only exposed to English when they are studying this subject in the classroom, while outside the English class they almost never get exposed to English. Moreover, teaching English in many instances is presented in a mixture of Indonesian and English, or totally in Indonesian. In general, this minimum exposure to English then contributes to students' unsatisfactory performance in the four language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In traditional language classrooms, learners are taught chiefly about language and its rules. They learn facts about language rather than how to use it to express ideas communicatively, to talk and to write to other people, to read and to listen to the real language, and to learn how to cooperate with others.

Writing is one of the four main skills in English learning. Writing ability can help someone to give any information from printed materials. Writing is one of the basic tools of civilization. It is a process of expressing feelings, thoughts, and ideas in the form of graphic language. Writing is very advantageous for communication, although it is only a secondary representation of language.

According to Troyka (1991:2), there are some reasons why writing is important. Firstly, writing is a way of thinking and learning, it gives people a unique opportunity to explore ideas and acquire information. Secondly, writing is a way of discovering the act of writing which allows people to make unexpected connections between ideas and language. Finally, educated people need to master writing ability.

Learning English requires the ability to compose the correct sentence. It implies that writing has a very important role to learn English. Many students tend to have the same opinion that writing skill is the most difficult skill among the other skills of English. The difficulties lie in generating, organizing, and translating ideas into readable text (Richards et al., 2002).

Writing is an important skill that involves a whole life skill; creative process in finding, resulting and shaping proposition, analysis system, feedback, and revision. Writing in a foreign language is not a simple matter as how to write new things down in a new order, but it is the ability which used structures, lexical items, and their conventional representation in the ordinary matter of fact of writing. Writing is a thinking process in its own right and certainly needs a great intellectual effort which usually takes place over a considerable period of time.

From the researchers' interview to the English teacher of SMPN 7 Ambon, the researchers concluded some problems related to the writing ability. First, the students make errors in their writing and still difficult to construct the sentences. Second, the students felt bored with the teacher's method in teaching writing. It is because the English teaching-learning process tends to deal with theory not practice. Whereas mastering writing skill requires more practice. Third, the students need an interesting strategy in learning writing. Last, the students found some difficulties in writing; sentence structure, grammar, and vocabulary. But the basic issue is the students are still not enthusiastic to write some sentences, moreover a paragraph in the writing learning process.

Related to the phenomena at SMPN 7 Ambon, the interesting and effective teaching media is needed in teaching writing skill. According to the researchers, comic strip can be applied in this situation. Comic strip can help students to improve their attentiveness through the visual features (Levin and Mayer, 1993). According to Sulistyawati & Veniranda (2021), using comic strips in a learning activity has several advantages. First, most of students are attracted to the comic genre. Second, the comic is accessible and it provides a visual element, such as picture and text. Students might be easily inspired to generate their ideas into a readable text due to the visual aid.

Several studies found that comic strip was efficient to improve students' ability in writing skill. Wahyudin (2019) conducted quantitative research to confirm the effect of e-comic in the teaching of writing. The result of this research showed that the students' writing ability was improved in terms of content, and organization. Sulistyawati & Veniranda (2021) conducted classroom action research to investigate the implementation of comic strips to improve students' writing skill. This research pointed out that comic strips can improve students' writing skills in the English subject. Hamidah et al (2015) employed pre-experimental research to prove whether the use of comic strip was effective or not to improve the students' skill in writing narrative text. The findings showed that the use of comic strip is effective to improve the students' skill in writing narrative text.

Despite the fact that several literatures have confirmed the usability of comic strips in English classrooms specially in writing skill, it has been approved that comic strips can improve the students' writing ability. Thus, this research highlights the effectiveness of comic strip toward the students' writing ability in constructing descriptive text.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Definition of Writing**

Writing is different from other skills like speaking, listening, and reading. Writing is a complex process that allows writers to explore thoughts and ideas, and make them visible and concrete. Writing is one of the important skills that language learners need to learn as an essential component not only for their academic practice but also later in their professional life. Brown (1994: 324) stated that writing is a way of life. It means that writing is very important for people to communicate in their daily life, such as writing a message, letter, or to make a story.

According to Troyka (1991:3-4), Writing is a way of communication. It means writing is one way of communication used by people in written form to express what is in their

minds. Writing is the result of thinking, drafting, and revising procedures that are required in specialized skill (Brown, 2000:325). People need to complete all the procedures to get good writing.

## Teaching Writing

Based on Harmer (2001:246), writing is a productive skill in learning English. The productive skills of writing and speaking are different in many ways. It means when the students are working on their language production, they should be operating towards the communicative and the communication continuum. One of chief advantages of production activities is that they provide evidence for students and their teachers to assess how well things are going.

Nunan (1999:272) said one of the most controversial aspects of writing pedagogy has been the tension between process and product approaches to teaching writing. Product-oriented approaches focus on the final product, coherent, and error-free text. While the process approaches focus on the steps involved in drafting and redrafting a piece of work. It means between product-oriented approaches and process approaches have a strong relationship that can't be separated.

The explanation above has a relation with Harmer (2001:257); teaching writing needs approaches to students' writing. The process will be going through during the learning taking place. Oshima & Hogue (2007) described the process approach to teaching writing, which includes four steps; prewriting, organizing, writing, and polishing (revising and editing). While the product of learning to write will be seen after passing the editing and redrafting. It will be seen from the child's ability in writing.

## Comic Strip

Comic strips are a short sequence of amusing pictures with a small amount of text that are typically published in newspapers (Naomi, n.d.). According to Oxford Learner's pocket dictionary (Manser, 1995:77), comic strips are the series drawings telling an amusing story. The other definition of comic strip is the combination of cartoon with a story line, arranged in a series of pictorial panels across page and concerning a continuous character or set of character, whose thoughts and dialogues are indicated by means of "balloons" containing written speech. The comic strip form can be employed to convey a variety of messages (e.g., advertisement). Britannica article define comic strip as series adjacent drawn images, usually arranged horizontally that are designed to be read as a chronological sequence. The story is usually original in this form. Words may be introduced within or near each image; they may also be dispensed with all together. If words functionally dominate the image, it then becomes merely illustration to a text.

The aims of using comic strip in this learning are:

1. To translate verbal source and to clarify the definition to the student.
2. To make student easy to imagine the event in the comic strip.
3. To help student to express idea based on the picture.

The benefit of using comic strip as the media of learning as follow:

1. Make the easy in comprehension in the content of reading.
2. Help the student to improve the idea.
3. Help the student to arrange the idea based on the sequence time in the comic strip.

#### 4. Add the motivation to learn.

The style of description in comic is going into detail, so it made easy student to understand the picture and inspired the student to translate from the picture into text. Teachers can use the interdisciplinary strategy of mixing language and art to develop literacy, higher level thinking, and writing skills by creating comic strips in the classroom.

### **Descriptive Text**

Descriptive text is a text that give a detailed explanation to a particular thing, person, place, and or event. A descriptive paragraph explains how a person looks or how a person may behave. This type of paragraph also can explain the way a place or object appears, behaves and the surrounding environment. It used to create visual image of people, place, object, or even an event. The purpose of description is to describe and reveal a particular person, place, and thing. Description has a generic structure circumstance:

1. Identification: it is to identify the phenomenon to be described. It gives general information about the object.
2. Description: it is the explanation or description of the object or things that are described.

Students describe when they are talking or writing about picture, writing about character or place in a story, and reporting on animal. It means the purpose of description is to describe and reveal a particular person, place, and thing, or usually use to describe the picture or character in a story or an animal.

By genre of describing, it enables the categorisation or classification of an almost infinite range of experiences, observations and interactions into a system that orders the writer for immediate and future reference, and allows the reader to know them either objectively or subjectively, depending on the learning area or intent of the writer (Peter and Megan, 2005:97).

The description also used extensively in many text types, such as information reports, literary descriptions, and descriptive recounts, due to the need to classify and/or describe a process before explaining it, in the opening paragraphs of most explanations. Description is also a central feature of narrative texts providing the means for developing characterization, sense of place and key themes.

### **METHOD**

This research is an experimental research. The aim of this research is to find out the effectiveness of using comic strip to teach writing skill at the eight grade students. The final objective of the experimental research is to find out the effective method in teaching writing. There were two groups related to this research, experimental group and control group. The experimental group of this research was a group which was given the treatment (the group which taught by using comic strip), while the control group of this research was a group which taught without using comic strip. The research compared the result of the experimental group and the control group.

The sample of this research is divided into two groups; they are experimental group which is taught by using comic strip in making descriptive text and control group which is taught without using comic strip in making descriptive text. The population of this research

were the students of the eight grade of SMPN 7 Ambon. It consist of two classes: VIII 2 and VIII 3. The researchers chose this school because it becomes a new challenging for the researchers to face the new students that the researchers never seen before.

The sample of this research were 2 classes consisting 60 students in both classes. One class was used as an experimental group which taught using comic strip in making descriptive text and the other class was used as a control group which taught without using comic strip in making descriptive text.

The researchers used random sampling technique in this research. It means that the researchers chose two groups randomly. The first is experimental group and the second is control group. The instrument for this research was a test. This test was aimed to measure the students' writing ability. The test is about making descriptive text, jumble sentence, and describing things. Indeed, there have been two instruments in this research; pre- test and post- test. Pre- test and post-test were given by using the jumble words, describing things related to the topic, complete the name of the pictures, and ask the students to tell 5 kinds of animals with their own color.

The researchers used inters rate technique in analyzing the instrument in order to reduce the subjectivity of the instrument. The rate is the English teacher and the researchers. In this research, the researchers conducted testing to get the information that the researchers needs. The researchers conducted two types of tests; pre-test in the first meeting and post-test after giving treatment toward the students.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

From the data analysis, the researchers find out the students' writing ability in experimental class who were taught by using comic strip is more effective than the students in the control class. Before conducting the treatment, the mean score of experimental class is 37.20 and the standard deviation is 22.69. The maximum score of pre-test is 78.00 and the minimum score is 0.00.

**Table 1. Pre-test in the experimental class**

Experimental Class	Number of Students	Mean	Standard Deviation	Maximum Score	Minimum Score
Pre-test	30	37.2000	22.69498	78.00	.00

None of the students achieved *very good* category, 3 students or 10.0% achieved *good* category, *fair* category consist of 5 students or 16.7%, *poor* category were 6 students or 20.0% and *very poor* category were 16 students or 53.3%.

**Table 2. The frequency distribution of pre-test in the experimental class**

No	Score	Frequency	Percentage	Category
1.	82,5 - 100,0	0	0%	Very good
2.	67,5 -< 82,5	3	10.0%	Good
3.	52,5 -< 67,5	5	16.7%	Fair
4.	37,5 -< 52,5	6	20.0%	Poor
5.	00,0 < 37,5	16	53.3%	Very poor
	<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>	

After conducting the treatment, the result data show differences. Mean score increases from 37.20 to 60.60 with the standard deviation 22.69 to 27.47. The maximum score is 91.00 and minimum score is 0.00.

**Table 3. Post-test in the experimental class**

Experimental Class	Number of students	Mean	Standard Deviation	Maximum Score	Minimum Scores
Post-test	30	60.6000	27.47488	91.00	.00

Meanwhile, frequency distribution of post-test shows mutual improvement too. Most of the students; 9 students or 30% achieved *very good* category, the students who achieved *good* category are 6 students or 20.0%, 6 students or 20.0% achieved *fair* category, 3 students or 10.0% achieved *poor* category, and 6 students or 20.0% are *very poor* category.

**Table 4. The frequency distribution of post-test in the experimental class**

No	Score	Frequency	Percentage	Category
1.	82,5 - 100,0	9	30.0%	Very good
2.	67,5 - < 82,5	6	20.0%	Good
3.	52,5 - < 67,5	6	20.0%	Fair
4.	37,5 - < 52,5	3	10.0%	Poor
5.	00,0 < 37,5	6	20.0%	Very poor
	<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Besides that, the researchers found the psychological factor also give contribution in learning process. The students in the experimental class feel happier after comic strip is applied in their learning process than before. They were very excited to follow the learning process. The students also pay more attention with the material which is taught using comic strip.

This condition is different from control class. From pre-test result, in the control class, 2 students or 6.7% achieved *very good* category, 5 students or 16.7% achieved *good* category, 7 students or 23.3% achieved *fair* category, the students who get *poor* category are 4 students or 13.3% and most of the students in control group get *very poor* category; 12 students or 40.0%.

**Table 5. Frequency distribution of Pre-test in the control class****The Frequency Distribution of Pre-test in the Control Class**

No	Score	Frequency	Percentage	Category
1.	82,5 - 100,0	2	6.7%	Very good
2.	67,5 -< 82,5	5	16.7%	Good
3.	52,5 -< 67,5	7	23.3%	Fair
4.	37,5 -< 52,5	4	13.3%	Poor
5.	00,0 < 37,5	12	40.0%	Very poor
	<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>	

The result of the control class gets upper score than experimental class when doing the pre-test. So, the ability of the students to find out their writing ability between experimental and control class are same. The pre-test in control class did not show the significance difference.

Even though before conducting the treatment the students in experimental class get lower score than the students in control class, but after conducting the treatment the student's ability in making descriptive text in experimental class show the significant difference. Meanwhile, the students in control class did not show the significant difference.

**Table 5. Frequency distribution of Post-test in the control class**

No	Score	Frequency	Percentage	Category
1.	82,5 - 100,0	0	0%	Very good
2.	67,5 -< 82,5	2	6.7%	Good
3.	52,5 -< 67,5	15	50.0%	Fair
4.	37,5 -< 52,5	7	23.3%	Poor
5.	00,0 < 37,5	6	20.0%	Very poor
	<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Based on the data above, it can be concluded that achievement of experimental class after given the treatment is better than control class which is not given the treatment. It means there is significant difference between the students who are taught using comic strip and those are taught without using comic strip. Thus, the hypothesis proposed by the researchers is accepted.

## CONCLUSION

After analyzing the empirical data, it can be confirmed that the use of comic strip is effective in making a descriptive text. It can be seen from the mean score of the the post-test is highest than the mean scores of the pre-test ( $60.60 > 37.20$ ) and the standard deviation of the post-test is highest than the standard deviation of the pre-test ( $27.47 > 22.69$ ). Furthermore, the hypothesis testing indicates that the score of the experimental are significantly higher than the score of the control group. Based on the result of the data

analysis, it is found that there is a significance difference between using comic strip and without using comic strip. In addition, the use of comic strip raises the students' interest in learning writing skill. It provides an interesting and fun learning process to the students in the classroom.

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