

## *Improving the VII – C Grade Students' Achievement in Writing a Descriptive Paragraph by Using the Roundtable Technique at SMP Negeri 2 Tanggul, Jember*

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### **Abstract**

*This classroom action research was intended to improve the students' active participation and their achievement in writing a descriptive paragraph by using the roundtable technique at SMP Negeri 2 Tanggul, Jember. The subjects of the research were class VII – C that consisted of 36 students. The research was conducted in two cycles. Writing test and observation were the methods used to collect the primary data. The result of writing test and observation were analyzed quantitatively in the percentage. Based on the result of analysis, it could be concluded that the use of the roundtable technique could improve the students' achievement in writing a descriptive paragraph and their active participation. The improvement could be seen for the result of writing test in the first cycle that showed 66.67% of the students who got score  $\geq 70$  to 77.78% of the students who got score  $\geq 70$  in the second cycle. Then, the results of observation showed that 66.67% of the students who were active in the teaching learning process in the first cycle to 79.17% of the students who were active in the teaching learning process in the second cycle. Therefore, it can be indicated that the use of the roundtable technique could improve the students' achievement in writing a descriptive paragraph and their active participation in the teaching learning process at SMP Negeri 2 Tanggul Jember.*

**Keywords:** *Active Participation, Students' Achievement in Writing a Descriptive Paragraph, Roundtable Technique, Classroom Action Research.*

### **Introduction**

English is intensively used as the international language. It plays an important role in human life as a means of communication and it is more important in globalization era. English is not only for communication but also for keeping up the development of technology, science, and education. In Indonesia English is a foreign language and it needs to develop in this country. In the field of education, English is a compulsory learning subject that must be taught to the students in schools from elementary to university level. Learning English requires four skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Brown, 2000:232). Listening and reading are input skills while speaking and writing are output skills.

In the teaching learning process of English, writing is one of the language skills that is often considered to be difficult to learn by students. Hudelson (1993:270) says writing is an essential literacy skill which is usually considered to be more difficult to master than listening, speaking, and reading. It means that some people are so self-conscious about making mistakes that they do not focus on what they want to write. It was happened to the students at SMP Negeri 2 Tanggul, Jember especially class VII – C. They had problem in writing a simple paragraph.

Based on the preliminary study conducted in the forms of observation and interview with the VII – C grade English teacher, it was informed that the students' in class

VII – C was still passive in the teaching learning process of English and also they had problems in writing a paragraph. When they were asked to write a simple descriptive paragraph, they had some difficulties in finding, generating, and developing their ideas. It was happened because they were lack of vocabulary and grammatical skills to convey their ideas. Besides, they also got stuck and took a long time to start their writing.

To solve the students' problem in the writing skill, the researcher aroused the students' motivation and used the appropriate technique and media in teaching writing. The technique that was used in teaching writing was roundtable technique and the media that were used in teaching writing were single pictures. These pictures were chosen because they had some contributions in teaching writing, especially to arouse the students' interest and motivation. In this case, single pictures were one of media that can help the students to memorize and understand about the material quickly. Single pictures are very easy to describe for the students to make a good descriptive paragraph rather than composite pictures and picture in series. The students will be interested in writing if they look at the single pictures which are provided by the teacher and the students can imagine what they should write about.

According to Yunus (1981:49–50), there are three kinds of pictures, namely: individual picture, composite picture, and picture in series. In this research, the

researcher used single pictures as media in teaching writing a descriptive paragraph by using roundtable technique. It was chosen because it was very simple and appropriate with the classroom condition to apply in teaching writing a descriptive paragraph by using the roundtable technique based on the material learned by the students in the seventh grade. White and Arndt (1992:35) state that each student will bring different perception and interpretation to picture but at least it will help to produce a sentence by looking at the picture.

Beside the use of single pictures as media in teaching writing, the roundtable technique was used as a teaching technique in this research. It was used because the students will be encouraged to work together and to participate equally in the writing process. It means they can share ideas with one another through the writing process. Roundtable technique can ensure the high-achieving students to help the low-achieving in doing writing task. In other word, it can build social interaction in the classroom. Hudelson (1993:279) states roundtable can be used for team building, for reviewing, and for brainstorming. It means that roundtable is appropriate to use in some activities, such as: creative writing, brainstorming, and reviewing previously taught material. In doing the roundtable, all students were involved.

There were five steps in doing the roundtable technique in teaching writing a descriptive paragraph, they are: (1) formatting the roundtable group/team, (2) posing the "multiple-answer" question, (3) responding to the "multiple-answer" question, (4) discussing the "multiple-answer" question, and (5) writing a descriptive paragraph. In this research, the researcher used single pictures as media and roundtable technique to teach writing a descriptive paragraph. The procedures of using the roundtable technique with single pictures in teaching writing a descriptive paragraph were modified. The modifications were intended to improve the students' writing ability and actively engage them in generating ideas and writing a descriptive paragraph to present their written products.

Dealing with the use of the roundtable technique, Sari (2010) reported that roundtable model of cooperative learning can improve the eighth grade students' writing achievement at SMPN 3 Bondowoso. In addition, Rahmawati (2010) reported that the use a roundtable technique could improve the eighth year students' writing achievement and their active participation at SMPN 2 Rogojampi – Banyuwangi.

The objectives of the research were: to improve the VII – C grade students' active participation in the teaching learning process of writing a descriptive paragraph by using the roundtable technique at SMP Negeri 2 Tanggul Jember and to improve the VII – C grade students' achievement in writing a descriptive paragraph by using the roundtable technique at SMP Negeri 2 Tanggul Jember.

## Research Methods

The reserach design that was used in this research was a Classroom Action Research. This research was conducted at SMP Negeri 2 Tanggul, Jember. The classroom action research with cycle model was applied in this research. It was intended to improve the seventh grade students' achievement in writing a descriptive paragraph with single pictures by using roundtable technique. This research was done in cycle model. Each cycle consisted of four stages of activities namely: the planning of the action, the implementation of the action, the observation and evaluation, and the data analysis method and reflection of the action.

This classroom action research was conducted at SMP Negeri 2 Tanggul, Jember in the 2013/2014 academic year. It was chosen because the principal gave permission to conduct this classroom action research and the English teacher agreed to solve the students' writing problem by conducting the classroom action research because he had never applied roundtable technique in teaching writing a descriptive paragraph.

The subjects of this research were taken from the students of class VII – C in SMP Negeri 2 Tanggul, Jember in the 2013/2014 academic year. The purposive method was used to determine the subjects of this research. The number of the subjects were 36 students of class VII – C that consisted of 25 males and 11 females. The teacher suggested to do the classroom action research in class VII – C because they still had problem in writing. It was proven by the result of the mean score of the students' writing test that was 64.44 and the standart score of requirement of writing at athis school was 70. The students who could reach the target score of 70 were only 17 students of 36 students. It means that only 47.22% of students had already achieved the target score of 70. In addition, class VII – C had the lowest mean score in writing test among the seven classes. Therefore, class VII – C was chosen in this research subjects purposively.

The research data covered primary data and supporting data. The primary data were collected from the writing test and the observation. In this research, achievement test was used to measure the students' writing achievement in writing a descriptive paragraph. Then, the observation was intended to monitor the students' participation in the teaching and learning process of writing a descriptive paragraph with single pictures by using the roundtable technique.

The supporting data were obtained from interview with the English teacher and the documents. Interview in this research was used to get the data about the students' problem in writing a descriptive paragraph, the percentage of the students' active participation in the teaching learning process of English, the way or the technique and media that the English teacher used in teaching writing in the classroom, and the curriculum used in teaching writing. Documents, in this research, were used to get the

supporting data about the names of the research subjects and their previous scores result of writing test from the English teacher.

### Discussion

Based on the preliminary study, it was informed that about 50% of the students in class VII – C were actively participated in the teaching learning process of writing. After the actions given in the first cycle, it was showed that only 24 students or 66.67% of 36 students actively participated in the teaching learning process of writing a descriptive paragraph with single pictures by using the roundtable technique in the first meeting. In the second meeting, there were 26 students or 72.22% of 36 students actively participated in the teaching learning process of writing a descriptive paragraph by using the roundtable technique. The average result of the students' active participation in Cycle 1 was 69.45%. It showed that there was improvement of the students' active participation compared with before the actions given but it had not achieved the objective of the research that was 75% of the students actively participated in the teaching learning process of English. Then, in the second cycle, the results of observation showed that 77.78% of the students were active in the first meeting and 80.56% of the students were active in the second. The average result of the students' active participation in Cycle 2 was 79.17%. So, the result of the classroom observation in cycle 2 had achieved the objective of the research. It could be concluded that the use of the roundtable technique could improve the students' active participation in the teaching learning process of writing with single pictures.

Then, the students' achievement in writing a descriptive paragraph improved after applying the roundtable technique in teaching writing with single pictures. Before the action given, the result of writing test showed that 47.22% or 17 students of 36 students who got score  $\geq 70$ . After the first cycle given, the percentage of the students who got score  $\geq 70$  was only 24 students or 66.67% of 36 students. It means that the result of the writing test in the first cycle had not achieved the criteria of success of the research that was 75% of the students got score 70 or more in the writing test. So, the researcher continued the action to the second cycle by revising the weak aspects that happened in the first cycle.

Then, in Cycle 2, the percentage of the students who got score  $\geq 70$  in the writing test was 28 or 77.78% of 36 students. Based on the result, it could be concluded that the result of the students writing test in the second cycle was successful or had achieved the criteria of the success of the action that was at least 75% of the students got score  $\geq 70$  in the writing test.

The implementation of the roundtable technique gave the advantages to the students and the English teacher of class VII – C of SMP Negeri 2 Tanggul, Jember. It was

due to the fact that the students and the English teacher got an experience in the teaching learning process of writing by using the roundtable technique. Although this technique was still new for the English teacher since he had never heard about this technique before this action research was conducted, he claimed that this technique was good to be used in teaching writing. By using this technique, the students were easy to generate or develop their ideas. This technique also made the students motivated. This classroom action research can modify the routine technique used by the English teacher in teaching writing. On the other hand, this technique also had some weaknesses like every other teaching technique. The weaknesses that occurred in the class were: First, the condition of the class became inconducive. The students were noisy, sometimes they moved and spoke too much. That condition made the researcher and the English teacher difficult to control them. Second, the problem that appeared was the students' learning style. As we know that the students' learning style is different from one to another.. The last disadvantage, in applying the roundtable technique in the teaching learning process of writing was the researcher and the English teacher only had little time to explain the material. However, the weaknesses that happened in the first cycle could be solved by revising the actions in the second cycle.

### Conclusion and Suggestions

Based on the results of data analysis and discussion, it could be conducted as follows:

1. The use of the Roundtable Technique could improve the VII – C grade students' active participation in the classroom during the teaching learning process of writing at SMP Negeri 2 Tanggul, Jember in the 2013/2014 academic year. The improvement could be seen from the percentage of the students' active participation that was 69.45% in Cycle 1 to 79.17% in Cycle 2.
2. The use of the Roundtable Technique could improve the VII – C grade students' achievement in writing a descriptive paragraph with single pictures at SMP Negeri 2 Tanggul, Jember in the 2013/2014 academic year. The improvement could be seen from the result of the writing test in each cycle. In the first cycle, there were 24 students or 66.67% of the students could achieve the target score ( $\geq 70$ ) in the writing test. Then, there were 28 students of 77.78% of the students in the second cycle could achieve the target score ( $\geq 70$ ) in the writing test.

By considering the results of the implementation of the roundtable technique in teaching writing that could improve the students' achievement in writing a descriptive paragraph with single pictures and their active participation, some suggestions are proposed to the following people:

1. The VII – C Grade Students' of SMP Negeri 2 Tanggul, Jember

The students are suggested to practice as frequently as possible the roundtable technique as the technique in

writing since it could be used as a guide to generate and organize their ideas in writing a descriptive paragraph with single pictures.

#### 2. The English Teacher

It is suggested that the English teacher apply the roundtable technique in teaching writing a descriptive paragraph with single pictures. It is due to the fact that roundtable technique could improve the students' achievement in writing a descriptive paragraph with single pictures and their active participation in the teaching learning process.

#### 3. The Future Researchers

The future researchers are suggested to conduct another research by using the roundtable technique on writing skill or components by using different research design with different subjects and schools.

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