

Improving the X-7 Grade Students' Descriptive Text Writing Achievement by Using Braindancing-and-Downhilling Technique at MAN 1 Jember

Wawan Nurcahyono, Bambang Suharjito, Sugeng Ariyanto
English Education Study Program
Faculty of Teacher Training and Education,
Jember University
Jln. Kalimantan 37, Jember 68121
E-mail: Bambang_suharjito@gmail.com

Abstract

Teaching writing skills in Senior High Schools aims at making the students to be able to construct a good text. The use of braindancing-and-downhilling technique as a technique in teaching writing descriptive text was done through cyclical classroom action research. The students of class X-7 of MAN 1 Jember as the research participants. The main data were collected through observation and writing test. As many as 43.75% of the students were indicated as active participants in meeting one of cycle one. It increased to 53.125% in meeting two. Meanwhile, as many as 56.25% of the students achieved 75 or higher in writing test. In meeting one of cycle two, as many as 68.75% of the students were actively participated during the teaching learning process of writing. It improved to 81.25% in meeting two. The percentage of the students who achieved 75 or higher in writing test was 78.125%.

Key Words: *Braindancing-and-Downhilling Technique, Classroom Action Research, Students' Participation, Writing Achievement.*

Introduction

In Indonesia, English is considered a foreign language learned, and it has become a compulsory subject at junior and senior high schools as well as a local content subject in elementary school. The teaching of English covers four skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In addition, it covers three components, namely pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Based on the above four skills, there are two productive skills which are used as communication, those are speaking and writing. In addition, writing is still considered a difficult skill because it involves more mental and physical effort than speaking (Fairbairn and Winch, 2011:71). In line with this, Langan (2008:8) says: "Writing is, in fact, a process. It is done not in one easy step but in a series of steps, and seldom at one sitting"

The English teacher can apply any technique or media in writing class. A preliminary study was done by interviewing the English teacher of grade X-7 of MAN 1 Jember. It aimed to know how she taught English especially writing, what difficulties found by the students, how she overcame the problems, what technique or media she used in the teaching learning process, and so on. It was found that braindancing-and-downhilling technique was never applied in teaching writing.

Braindancing-and-downhilling technique is a technique which combines two process those are braindancing; letting

the idea comes to mind then recording them by using spiderweb, and downhillling; constructing a text based on the spiderweb that has been made (Means and Lindner, 1998:77). Its main function is to record the thoughts before the students loose it. This research used braindancing-and-downhilling technique as the teaching technique to help the teacher in teaching writing descriptive text. It was chosen because braindancing-and-downhilling technique had some advantages. It will be very helpful for the students who are so slow in expressing their idea before they lose it (Means and Lindner, 1998:77). Besides that, it makes the students be more focus on the core of writing (Buzan, 1999:165). Finally, braindancing-and-downhilling technique was used by the researcher as a technique in teaching writing descriptive text. Based on the previous study conducted by Riyanti (2010) at Madrasah Aliyah Darus Sholah Jember in 2010 found that braindancing-and-downhilling technique could improve the students' writing achievement. In line with Riyanti, Nuriyanah (2012) conducted research at SMA Negeri 1 Cigombong Bogor in 2012. She also found that braindancing-and-downhilling technique could improve the students' writing achievement. From the result above, braindancing-and-downhilling technique could improve the students' descriptive text writing achievement.

Research Methodology

This research employed classroom action research design where the focus was to improve the X-7 grade students' participation as well as their writing achievement. Braindancing-and-Downhilling technique was used as a technique in teaching learning process. The writing test was used to get the students' writing achievement while students' participation was recorded through classroom observation. The students of class X-7 of MAN 1 Jember in the 2013/2014 Academic Year were determined as the research participants. It consisted of 32 students. Based on the result of English daily test, it was known that only 13 students who passed the passing grade, 75.

The research was conducted collaboratively with the English teacher of grade X-7. The study was done on April 3th-25th, 2014 in two cycles. The data gained were 1) students' participation which obtained from direct observation and 2) students writing achievement obtained from the writing test. The cycles consist of planning of the action, implementing of the action, observation and evaluation, and reflection (Elliot, 1991). The research success was determined by the score of writing test and the obtained indicator of active participation.

1. Planning the action; the activities done were choosing the action and the topic, constructing lesson plans, constructing observation checklist, constructing writing test, and also setting the criteria of success.
2. Implementing the action; this classroom action research was carried in cycle model. The activities covered three stages, namely set induction, main activities, and closure. It was given to research participants in every meeting in each cycle. The first meeting was done based on lesson plan I and the second meeting was done based on lesson plan II. Then, in the third meeting, the students were given writing test to measure their writing achievement.
3. Observation and Evaluation; the observation was done by the researcher and the English teacher. In this case, a checklist containing some indicators was used to record the students' active participation. The evaluations used in this research were process and product evaluation. The process evaluation was done by conducting observation during the teaching learning process of writing descriptive text. In addition, the product evaluation was administered at the end of each cycle in the form of writing test.
4. Doing Reflection; the researcher and the English teacher discussed and gave feedback on what happened during the implementation of the actions. The weaknesses occurred in cycle 1 were the application in the use of braindancing-and-downhilling technique

The area determination method of this research was using purposive method. According to Arikunto (2006:139), purposive method is a method employed in choosing the research area based on a certain purpose or

reason such as limited time, energy, and fund. This research was conducted at MAN 1 Jember and the research participants was the X-7 grade students at MAN 1 Jember in 2013/2014 academic year.

Research Findings

Classroom observation was done to get the primary data of the research about the students' participation during the teaching learning process of writing by using braindancing-and-downhilling technique. The observation was done in each meeting. The observation guide was in the form of checklist containing of five indicators. They were (1) Asking questions in relation to the use of braindancing-and-downhilling technique ; (2) Answering questions in relation to the use of braindancing-and-downhilling technique; (3) Doing the exercises; (4) Braindancing; (5) Writing the descriptive text based on their braindancing (downhilling) accompanied by braindancing-and-downhilling technique confidently and completely. The students were considered active if the students fulfilled at least four of five indicators. The research was considered successful if 70% of students were active.

In meeting 1 of cycle 1, there were 14 students (43.75%) of 32 students who were actively involved in the teaching learning process. Meanwhile, 18 students (56.25%) were less actively involved in teaching learning process of writing descriptive text by using braindancing and downhilling technique. 5 of 33 students were asking questions in relation to the use of braindancing and downhilling technique. 14 students answering questions, 27 students doing exercises, 32 students braindancing, and 32 students writing the descriptive text based on their braindancing (downhilling).

In meeting 2 of cycle 1, there were 17 students (53.125%) of 32 students who were actively involved in this meeting. Meanwhile, 15 students (46.875%) were less actively involved in teaching learning process of writing by using braindancing-and-downhilling technique. It means that the active participation of the students was improved 9.375% from 43.75% in meeting one to 53.125% in meeting two. 12 of 33 students were asking questions in relation to the use of braindancing and downhilling technique. 17 students answering questions, 29 students doing exercises, 32 students braindancing, and 32 students writing the descriptive text based on their braindancing (downhilling). There were 22 of 32 students fulfilled at least 4 indicators of the students' active participation it was found that there were 17 of 32 students fulfilled at least 4 indicators of the students' active participation. In conclusion, both in the meeting one and two, the percentage of students' active participation did not achieve the target requirement that was 70%.

The result of observation in the second cycle showed improvement. In meeting 1 of cycle 2, there were 22 of 32 students fulfilled at least 4 indicators of the students' active

participation. In conclusion, there were 68.75% of the students were actively participated during the teaching learning process. 17 of 33 students were asking questions in relation to the use of braindancing and downhillling technique. 18 students answering questions, 30 students doing exerises, 32 students braindancing, and 32 students writing the descriptive text based on their braindancing (downhillling).

In meeting 2 of cycle 2, there were 26 of 32 students fulfilled at least 4 indicators of the students' active participation. In conclusion, there were 81.25% of the students were actively participated during the teaching learning process. 18 of 33 students were asking questions in relation to the use of braindancing and downhillling technique. 20 students answering questions, 31 students doing exerises, 32 students braindancing, and 32 students writing the descriptive text based on their braindancing (downhillling).

Based on writing test one, it was found that there were 18 of 32 students who got score 75 or higher. It means that 56.25% of the students achieved the passing grade that was 75. In writing test two, there were 25 of 32 students who got score 75 or higher. In other words, the percentage of the students who achieved the passing grade improved to 78.125%.

The results of writing test showed that braindancing-and-downhillling technique was able to improve the students' score in writing test. The use of braindancing-and-downhillling technique in teaching descriptive text writing was capable to record the students' thoughts before they lose it (Means and Lindner, 1998:77). It helped the students' in constructing a descriptive text, because by using this technique the students had guidances so that it was easier for them to organize the text.

Discussion

After conducting two cycles in this classroom action research, the evaluation revealed that the use of braindancing-and-downhillling technique was able to improve the students' active participation in joining the teaching learning process. This finding based on the observation data. In addition, it was showed that the students' descriptive text writing achievement was also improved from cycle 1 to cycle 2.

Braindancing-and-downhillling technique gives effects to the students' participation indirectly. By using this technique, the students could be more focus to the ideas that they are going to write. Buzan (1999:162) says that braindancing-and-downhillling technique should be focus on the core question. Be clear about what it is that you are aiming for or trying to resolve. This fact is supported by the findings of this study which revealed that the students' focus on what they are going to write brought about an active participation in the teaching learning process. The writing activity became more interesting when the students

could construct a text. Braindancing-and-downhillling technique were able to help the students getting start and generating the ideas. It is not only make the students be more focus but also attracted and increased their attention. This resulted in their enthusiasm toward the instruction and the whole learning process.

In this research, the score of students' writing test showed an improvement. There were 18 of 32 students (56.25%) who achieved the minimum score that was 75 in the first cycle. It increased in the second cycle. The students who got 75 or higher of writing test were 25 of 32 students (78.125%). However, there were some students who got difficulties in braindancing and constructing a text (downhillling). The students' difficulties about the ideas, vocabulary, and grammar. In organizing the idea, some students were stiiil confused with the differences between report and descriptive text. To cope with this problem, the researcher gave explanation and examples of recount text and then compared it with descriptive text. Dealing with vocabulary, the researcher allowed the students to use their dictionary. For grammar, few students still got difficulties in the use of simple present tense. To cope with this problem, the researcher gathered those students in a room after the end of the teaching learning process. Then the researcher gave them guidance related to the use of simple present tense, giving more explanation how to write the sentences correctly.

The results of this action research supported the previous research finding conducted by Riyanti (2010). She investigated the use of braindancing-and-downhillling technique in improving the students' ability in writing analytical exposition texts on the eleventh grade students at Madrasah Darus Sholah Jember. Her result indicated that the use of braindancing-and-downhillling technique could improve the students' ability in writing analytical exposition text as well as their participation during the teaching learning process. The average score of the students' writing improved from 69.57% in cycle 1 to 79.2% in cycle 2. From the observation data, she also reported that the students' participated actively in the teaching learning process. It improved from 67.42% in cycle 1 to 78.24% in cycle 2. Another previous study was conducted by Nuriyanah (2012) at SMA Negeri 1 Cigombong Bogor in 2012. She conducted action research related to the use of braindancing-and-downhillling technique with analytical exposition text. She found that the students' average improved from 66.21 in cycle 1 to 76.48 in cycle 2. Marpaung (2012) also conducted research related to braindancing-and-downhillling technique. The differences are; she applied at SMP Free Methodist 1 Medan. In addition, the genre of the text she used was recount text. From her research, it was found that the students' achievement improve from 5.4% in cycle 1 to 29.8% in cycle 2. Then, it improved became 81.1% in cycle 3.

Concerning the affective factors, during the learning activity, an observation was conducted by observing the activities. Not only it was done to watch the students' active participation, but also to watch that they performed the four indicators. From the results, all students had shown that they were cooperative and confident in doing the task. They also respected the opinion of others and accepted different opinion because theirs are not correct.

Conclusions and Recommendation

This study revealed that the use of braindancing-and-downhilling technique was able to improve the X-7 grade students' participation and their achievement on writing descriptive text at MAN 1 Jember. It was proven by the percentage of the students' active participation which was improved in every meeting in each cycle as well as their score in writing test. In meeting one of cycle one, as many as 43.75% of the students were actively participated during the teaching learning process of writing. It increased to 56.25% in meeting two. Meanwhile, the percentage of the students who achieved 75 or higher in writing test was 56.25%. In meeting one of cycle two, as many as 68.75% of the students were actively participated during the teaching learning process of writing. It improved to 81.25% in meeting two. Meanwhile, as many as 78.125% of the students achieved 75 or higher in writing test.

On the basis of the results of the study, it is recommended that the English teacher use braindancing-and-downhilling technique to attract students' attention, help them focus on the teaching learning process of writing, and enhance their active participation. It is also suggested for future teacher- researchers to conduct further research dealing with the use of braindancing-and-downhilling technique by using different or the same research design at different schools or research subjects.

References

- [1] Arikunto, S. 2006. *Prosedur Penelitian: Suatu PendekatanPraktik*. Edisi Revisi IV. Jakarta: PT. Rineka Cipta . 139.
- [2] Buzan, T. 1999. *The Buzan Study Skills Handbook*. <http://bookza.org/book/1052045/74d153>. [retrieved on March 1, 2014]. 123–135.
- [3] Fairbairn, G., & Winch, C. 2011. *Reading, Writing and Reasoning A guide for students* (Third Edition). [http://www.en.book.fi/Gavin_Fairbairn_Christopher_Winch_Reading_writing_and_reasoning_a_guide_for_students_2011\(en.book.fi\)](http://www.en.book.fi/Gavin_Fairbairn_Christopher_Winch_Reading_writing_and_reasoning_a_guide_for_students_2011(en.book.fi)). [retrieved on August 4, 2013]. 71
- [4] Langan, J. 2008. *Exploring Writing Paragraphs and Essays*. New York: Mc Graw Hill. 6
- [5] Means, B., & Lindner, L. 1998. *Teaching Writing in Middle School: Tips, Tricks, and Techniques*. Colorado: Teacher Ideas Press. 77-79
- [6] Nuriyanah, E. 2012. *Improving Students' Ability to Write Analytical Exposition through mind mapping*. <https://www.google.co.id/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=107&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CFsQFjAGOGQ&url=http%3A%2F%2Fjournal.unpak.ac.id>. [retrieved on May 25, 2014].
- [7] Riyanti, I.W. 2010. "Improving the Eleventh Grade Students' Analytical Exposition Writing Achievement and Active Participation Through Mind Mapping Technique at Madrasah Aliyah Darus Sholah Jember". Not Published. Thesis. Jember: Undergraduate Program of Jember University. Unpublished S-1. Thesis University of Jember.

- [8] Marpaung, R.M. 2012. *Improving Students' Writing Recount Text Achievement Through Mind Mapping Technique in Junior High School*. <https://www.google.co.id/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=5&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CFOQFjAE&url=http%3A%2F%2Fjurnal.unimed.ac.id>. [retrieved on May 25, 2014].