

IMPROVING STUDENTS' WRITING SKILL by USING THINK PAIR SHARE (TPS)

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Abstract: The objectives of the research are to find out whether or not Think Pair Share improves the students' writing skill and to describe what happens when Think Pair Share is implemented in writing class. The implementation of Think Pair Share method in writing class was done within two cycles. Cycle 1 was conducted in three meetings and Cycle 2 was done in two meetings. The qualitative data were collected through observation, questionnaire, interview, and document analysis; while the quantitative ones were collected through test. The qualitative data were analyzed by using five stages suggested by Burns; whereas the quantitative data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics. The research findings show that the use of Think Pair Share can improve students' writing skill and the situation of English class.

Keyword: Think Pair Share, Writing skill, Writing class

English is the first foreign language in Indonesia. It is learned by the students in every school level, from elementary levels until university level. They learn English twice or more a week. They realize that English is an important language, so they need to learn and master English well.

In general, the goal of teaching English at school is students are able to communicate using English both oral and written. It can be said that the goal of teaching English at school is the students are able to communicate using English both oral and written.

In line with the goal, teaching English at Junior High School is to support the mastery and development of four skills: (1) listening; (2) speaking; (3) reading; and (4) writing. Writing is one of skills in learning a new language that is learnt by students beside listening, speaking, and reading. Writing help students to produce

grammatically correct and organize students' ideas.

Unfortunately, the 8th grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Jaten have not reached those competences yet. According to the school curriculum, students should score at least 7.3 in writing, but most of them scored lower. It was revealed through an interview the researcher conducted with them prior to the research. According to them, English was difficult and writing was, too. They had low writing skill. Their low writing skill was indicated by some indicators having been gathered in the pre research. They were: (1) students often made mistakes in stating main idea for their writings. They had difficulties in exploring idea to write. They did not know what to write; (2) Students' word choices were limited. Students sometimes found difficulties in applying the appropriate words to express their ideas; (3) Students also made many mistakes in structure. They

often made mistakes when applying the appropriate tense for their texts; (4) Students made many mistakes in word order. They often made many mistakes when ordering words into sentences; and (5) Students' writing lack of cohesiveness and coherence. Students did not get specific guidance of how to write systematically.

These problems may also have occurred due to the classroom situation. When observing the English class, the researcher found that: (1) Students did not pay attention to the teacher. They made noise. When the teacher was explaining the materials; the students talk to each other; (2) Students did non-academic activities rather than focusing on the lesson. They were operating their hand phone or even slept during the writing class; (3) Students could not answer when teacher asked questions and they seldom asked questions to the teacher; (4) Students refused to present their writings in front of the class; (5) Students spent much more time when writing. They preferred asking to have the writing assignment as their homework. When the students were asked to write a text, they needed longer time and could not finish it in the class.

There are many techniques and methods that can be used to help the students write easily and correctly. They can help the students in organizing the ideas and lessen their difficulty in writing activity. One of the methods is Think Pair Share (TPS). The researcher believes that Think Pair Share is a good method in conducting writing activity. By conducting a classroom action research that implements Think Pair Share Method, it is expected that the teacher be able to improve the students' writing skill. Think Pair Share is a cooperative discussion strategy developed by Frank Lyman and his colleagues in Maryland. It gets its name from the three

stages of students' action with emphasis on what students should do at each of those stages.

Think Pair Share is chosen because it has many advantages to apply in teaching writing for students. The researcher assumes that TPS is as a good technique in teaching writing since it gives students chance to dig their own ideas on what to write, share ideas with peer students, develop ideas, learn to criticize and accept criticisms and promote effective team work. By using Think Pair Share method, students will easily brainstorm the ideas to write and explore the details. They will write systematically in an organized way.

To have the better understanding about writing, the researcher presents some basic theories about writing suggested by some experts. Bell and Burnaby in Nunan (1998: 36) say that writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously. At the sentence level these include control of content, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, and letter formation. Beyond the sentence, the writer must be able to structure and integrate information into cohesive and coherent paragraphs and texts.

According to Harris (1993: 10), writing is a process that occurs over period of time, particularly if we take account the sometimes extended periods of thinking that precede initial draft. In writing, the writer needs a time to do some processes inside. The length of the time is different among writers. Some needs longer time to just think about what to write before making the initial draft.

The next definition is given by Byrne. He states that writing is producing a sequence of sentences arranged in particular

order and linked together in certain ways. A sequence of sentences whether it is short or long after being put in order and linked together, they will form a coherent whole. This coherent whole is called as text. A text may consist of one paragraph or more Byrne (1997: 1).

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that writing is a process that occurs over a period of time to produce a sequence of sentences arranged in a particular order and linked together in certain ways that is cohesive and coherent.

Harris (1969: 68-69) says there are five components which can be used to evaluate writing ability. They are: contents, grammar, word choice, organization, and mechanics.

Genesse and Upshur (1996: 207) suggest general categories which are often used for the evaluation of students writing, namely content, organization, vocabulary, language use or grammar, and mechanic. They also give numeral scores for each of the above categories as follow:

Table 1: The Scoring Rubric of Writing based on Upshur

1. Relevance and Adequacy Content

| | |
|----|--|
| 30 | Good development of thesis, relevant to assigned topic |
| 23 | Limited development of thesis, mostly relevant to topic, but lack detail |
| 15 | Inadequate development of topic |
| 7 | Does not show knowledge of topic, not enough to evaluate |

2. Compositional Organization

| | |
|----|---|
| 20 | Fluent expression, ideas, clearly stated/ supported, well-organized, logical sequencing (generic structure of descriptive text), cohesive |
| 15 | Loosely organized but main ideas stand out, limited supported, logical but incomplete sequencing |
| 10 | Non-fluent, ideas confused or disconnected, lacks logical sequencing and development |
| 5 | Does not communicate, no organization, or not enough to evaluate |

3. Adequacy of Vocabulary for purpose

| | |
|----|---|
| 20 | Sophisticated range, effective word choice |
| 15 | Adequate range, occasional errors of word choice, meaning not obscured |
| 10 | Limited range, frequent errors of word choice, meaning confused or obscured |
| 5 | Essentially translation, little knowledge of English vocabulary, word form, or not enough to evaluate |

4. Language Use

| | |
|----|--|
| 25 | Effective complex constructions, few errors of agreement, tense (simple present tense), word order/ function |
| 18 | Effective but simple construction, minor problems in complex construction, several errors of agreement, tense (simple present tense) word order/ function, but meaning seldom obscured |
| 12 | Major problems in simple/ complex constructions, frequent errors of negation, agreement, tense, word order/ function, meaning confused or obscured |
| 8 | Virtually no mastery of sentence constructions rules, dominated by errors, does not communicate, or not enough to evaluate |

5. Mechanic (Punctuation and Spelling)

| | |
|---|---|
| 5 | Few errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing |
| 4 | Occasional errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing but meaning not obscured |
| 3 | Frequent errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, poor handwriting, meaning confused or obscured |
| 2 | Dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, poor handwriting illegible, or not enough to evaluate |

RESEARCH METHODS

The researcher used action research with 32 eight graders of junior high school as the subject. The research was conducted in some steps: (1) Problem identification was done through four techniques including pre-test, questionnaire, observation, and interview; (2) planning the action included the step of making instructional materials, media, and anything needed for the research; (3) implementing the action in which the researcher implemented Think Pair Share to teach writing skill; (4) observing the action where the researcher observed the students' behavior and anything happened during the implementation of TPS method; (5) reflecting the action which the researcher reflected the research findings in order to get both strengths and weaknesses of implementation of TPS; and (6) revising the plan in which the researcher revised the previous plan based on the weaknesses found from the implementation of TPS method.

The data were collected by using quantitative and qualitative method. The quantitative data were collected from observation, interview, questionnaire, and document analysis. While, the quantitative data were collected from the students' writing score from test (pre-test, post-test 1 and post-test 2).

The next step of the study was analyzing the data. Qualitative data were analyzed using a method proposed by

Burns. The method includes the steps of assembling data, coding the data, comparing the data, building interpretation, and reporting outcome. Then, the quantitative data which were obtained from test were analyzed by using descriptive statistics formula.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this research, the researcher used TPS for teaching writing. The implementation of the researcher used TPS in the classroom were:

Think-Pair-Share to Improve Gaining Ideas to Write

- a. **Think:** each student thinks what about the object they want to write in their descriptive. Then they write their sentences into the correspondent columns. That would be fine to use their first language.
- b. **Pair:** each pair discusses if their ideas have been enough or not to describe the object. They can add or reduce some ideas if necessary. Then they arrange the idea into a good outline, which to be written first and which to be later.
- c. **Share:** each pair shares their results of pair-discussion to the class and receive any comment from the class.

In this case, what makes TPS helpful to gain ideas is the discussion happening in the stage of Pair and Share, in which students can help each other to gain ideas to write.

Think-Pair-Share to Improve

Vocabulary

After the class has agreed on the points to write about a descriptive, they then do another Think Pair Share activity to gain vocabulary about the points they have to write.

- a. **Think:** each student thinks of an English vocabulary to explain or describe each point to write about the object.
- b. **Pair:** each pair discusses if their English words to describe one's physical appearance are correct or not. They can revise, add, or remove some words before deciding the words they would like to share to the class.
- c. **Share:** each pair shares their results of pair-discussion to the class and receive any comment from the class.

In this case, what makes TPS helpful to improve vocabulary is also the discussion happening in the stage of Pair and Share, in which those whose vocabulary mastery is good can share and help those whose vocabulary mastery is poor.

Think-Pair-Share to Improve Grammar

After agreeing the words to describe each point to describe the object, students do TPS activity to make sentences using Simple Present Tense with the words.

- a. **Think:** each student thinks of an Indonesian sentence to describe the object using simple present tense. They then think of its equivalent in English. Then they write their sentences into the correspondent columns.
- b. **Pair:** each pair discusses if their way to write the English sentences have been correct or not. They can revise their

sentence together before deciding the sentences they would like to share to the class.

- c. **Share:** each pair shares their results of pair-discussion to the class, receiving any comment from the class. The teacher then explains which sentence is grammatically correct.

In short, what makes TPS helpful to improve grammar is the discussion happening in the stage of Pair and Share, in which those whose grammar mastery is good can share and help those whose grammar mastery is poor.

Think-Pair-Share to Improve

Conjunction Use

After writing sentences to describe the object, students do TPS activity to practice using proper conjunctions to combine or relate their sentence.

- a. **Think:** each student thinks of a conjunction to combine or relate the sentence they have made with their partners. Then they write their combining sentences with the conjunction into the correspondent columns.
- b. **Pair:** each pair discusses if their way to write the English sentences have been correct or not. They can revise their sentence together before deciding the sentences they would like to share to the class.
- c. **Share:** each pair shares their results of pair-discussion to the class, receiving any comment from the class.

In short, what makes TPS helpful to improve conjunction use is the discussion happening in the stage of Pair and Share, in which those who know better how to combine sentences can help those who do not.

After implementing Think Pair Share (TPS) method above that use to

improve students' writing skill, the researcher got some results dealing with

both writing skill and class situation. The result presented below:

Table 2: The improvement of Students' Score in Each Writing indicators

| | Content | Organization | Vocabulary | Grammar | Mechanic | Mean |
|---------------|---------|--------------|------------|---------|----------|-------|
| Before Action | 10.5 | 8.31 | 6.44 | 6.25 | 2.38 | 54.25 |
| After Cycle 1 | 23.50 | 15.16 | 14.53 | 14.44 | 4.72 | 73.75 |
| After Cycle 2 | 25.97 | 15.78 | 16.09 | 17.25 | 4.97 | 80.50 |
| Passing Grade | | | 7.3 | | | |

The table 2 shows the students' improvement in writing skill. Before action, the students had problems in all writing indicators. After the implementation of TPS method in cycle 1, it was found that the students got improvement in all indicators. Then, after cycle 2, the findings showed

that students had more improvement in writing score. In the cycle 2 the students score reach the passing grade.

The students' improvement was not only found in writing skill but also in class situation. The improvements are presented in the following table.

Table 3: The Students' Improvements in Class Situation

| Research Findings | Before Action Research | After Action Research |
|---|--|---|
| a. The improvement of the students' writing skill | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students often made mistakes in stating main idea for their writing; 2. Students' word choice were limited; 3. Students made many mistake in structure; 4. Students made many mistake in word order; 5. Students' writing lack cohesiveness and coherence. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students were able to explore their ideas. 2. Students were able to use proper words in writing. 3. Students were able to produce grammatically correct sentences 4. Students were able to use word order. 5. Students were able cohesiveness and coherence in their writing. |
| b. The achievement of the students' test score | The students' mean score was 73.75. | The students' mean score was improved into 73.75 in the post test 1 and it also improved into 80.50 in the final post test. It got higher than their score in pretest. |
| c. The improvement of class situation | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students did not pay attention to the teacher; 2. Students did non academic activities than focusing the lesson. 3. Students could not answer when teacher asked question and they seldom asked question to the teacher. 4. Students refused to present their writing in front of the class. 5. Students spent much more time when writing. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students pay attention to the teacher and more focused in the writing class. 2. Students could focus the lesson in the teaching learning process. 3. Students gave more responses when the teacher asked, they active answer the question and they brave asked about the lesson what they did not understand. 4. Students brave to present their writing in front of the class. 5. Students could finish their writing in class. |

From the table presented above, it can be seen that there are positive improvements in class situation after implementation TPS in writing class.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

After conducting the research by using Think Pair Share, the researcher got the research finding that there is a positive improvement of students' writing skill. The result of the research showed that the use of Think Pair Share is able to improve the students' writing skill that covers writing to explore their ideas, to use word choice, to write paragraph by using the correct grammar, and to use word order in writing sentences. The enhancement of the students' writing skill is also supported by the result of the test scores. The mean score of pre-test was 54.25 and it improved into 73.75 in the post-test 1 and 80.50 in the final post test. It proves that the use of Think Pair Share in teaching writing can improve the students' writing skill.

The class situation also changed after the researcher conducted action research using Think Pair Share. Using Think Pair Share, the students were more active because in Think Pair Share students had some discussion with their pairs and they could share their ideas freely. They were motivated by their discussing. The

students enjoyed the activities during the lesson. They spent their time as well as possible to discuss about the best answer of the question with their pairs. The students freely shared their ideas in front of the class.

The researcher proposes some suggestion after conducting the research by using Think Pair Share to improve students writing skill for the students, the school, and other researcher. For the students, the students must be active in teaching learning process, especially when they are taught by using Think Pair Share because through this technique they can ask their difficulty to their friends in pairs or teacher and they can freely share their ideas to the class. For the English Teacher, Think Pair Share can be used as alternative technique in teaching writing skill. The teacher should monitor students' activity during writing class and support the interaction among students in class. And teacher should give various materials for different meetings. Finally, for the School, the school must give more attention to students writing skill by providing some interesting writing materials and special training for teacher in understanding think pair share. And the school should also facilitate various media and materials supporting the teaching and learning process.

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