

IMPROVING WRITING SKILL OF THE SEVENTH-GRADE STUDENTS THROUGH ROUNDTABLE

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ABSTRACT

Speaking is one of the important language skills among reading, listening, and writing skills. By mastering speaking skills, a person can communicate well to convey the information they have to others. However, there are several problems experienced by students in learning English, including student comprehension, grammatical errors, and fluency. The purpose of this study is mainly to determine whether the writing skills of seventh grade students of SMPN 7 Denpasar in the 2024/2025 academic year can be improved through the roundtable technique. This study uses a classroom action research design carried out in two cycles. The required data were collected by providing research instruments: monologue performance tests and structured questionnaires. After the research cycle process, it was found that the roundtable technique was an appropriate teaching technique to improve the subject's writing skills, especially in composing and performing short descriptive monologues. This can be seen from the results of the pre-test, post-test 1 and post-test 2, which showed a significant increase in the subject's writing skills. In addition, this is supported by a structured questionnaire that showed a positive response to the application of the roundtable technique. It can be concluded that the writing skills of class VII students of SMPN 7 Denpasar in the 2024/2025 academic year can be improved by applying the roundtable technique.

Keywords: improving, writing skill, Roundtable

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the skills to be achieve in English language learning. Writing is a form of verbalizing thoughts, feelings, and ideas. Writing as a productive skill plays an important role in communication since not all the language users can express their idea in speak way. The ability to write involves specific skills, such as: the use of punctuation, structure of sentence, vocabulary, and organization of paragraph. Graham & Perin (2007) state that writing is a means of extending and deepening students' knowledge: it acts as a

tool for learning subject matter. Messages, memories, and various aspects of daily life are written by visualizing ideas into a written form. According to Zemach & Rumisek (2005), in free writing, whatever comes to mind about the topic is written by students without interruption.

The construction of writing must be approached with greater care, conciseness, and coherence to ensure clarity of meaning. The most challenging skill to learn and master is writing. The mastery of writing entails a diverse set of skills, encompassing sentence construction, vocabulary,

punctuation, and paragraph organization. Furthermore, writing, as a component of communication in life, is deemed crucial to acquire. Additionally, writing is a process that actively conveys ideas through the arrangement and manipulation of symbols. Based on Zemach & Islam (2005) explain that writing can be difficult because it is caused by two factors: there are psychological problems and cognitive problems.

Psychological problems occur when we write something we are required to write on our own without any possibility of interaction or the benefit of feedback. Another factor is cognitive problems; we need to master the written form of language such as; the use of grammar, punctuation, organizing ideas, etc. to make a good writing that can be understood well by the reader. Oshima & Hogue (2007) state that writing is never a one-step action; it is an ongoing creative act. The process of writing has roughly four steps. In the first step, you create ideas, in the second step, you organize the ideas, in the third step, you write a rough draft. In the final step, you polish your rough draft by editing it and making revisions. Furthermore, each step is very important so that students can improve their skills in making good paragraphs.

Those steps are crucial for students so that they can practice and improve their

writing skill. Furthermore, the students can learn how to make a good paragraph and how to develop their idea based on the criteria of paragraph with the process of writing. Paragraph is a group of sentences about a single topic. Together the sentences of the paragraph explain the writer's main idea about the topic (Zemach & Rumisek, 2005). When the writer wants to write about a new main idea, he/she begins a new paragraph. A paragraph can give information, tell an opinion, explain, or describe something, or even tell a short story. The sentence is arranged logically, so the reader can easily understand what the writer wants to say.

The process of writing a good paragraph is important to follow by all students. If students can focus on that, they must be written successfully. According to Zemach & Islam (2005), paragraph writing is designed to help low - intermediate students analyze model paragraphs, find ideas for their writing, put their ideas into sentences, organize their sentences into paragraphs, review their paragraphs and revise their paragraphs so that they become even stronger. This process did not only develop students' paragraph writing skills, but also encourage them to become independent and creative writers. Based on primary observation some students seventh

grade in SMPN 7 Denpasar seem have difficulties in making a good paragraph especially in generating and organizing their ideas in descriptive paragraph construction.

In addition, students do not know how to arrange and elaborate the paragraph well, using the correct format and punctuation as well as mechanic. Because of those difficulties, the students' scores in writing paragraph are not good enough and they have less interest in writing. To help them, the teacher had to provide the appropriate teaching strategy. If the teacher used an appropriate strategy, then the students was succeeded in writing, especially in writing a good paragraph. The teacher needed to know an interesting strategy to make the students more motivated. Therefore, the students enjoyed the teaching and learning process in the class, and they felt that making a paragraph was not as hard as they had thought.

The interaction between teachers and students had been unilateral, lacking feedback from students, making the learning activities dull. This teaching method led students to become passive in learning, particularly in writing classes, where teachers solely explained textbook material, and students only listened. Consequently, students faced confusion and difficulty in developing ideas for creating paragraphs,

resulting in a decline in student achievement. The teacher still uses Teacher-Centered Learning as the focused in the learning teaching process. However, it is an old technique that must be changed because in the curriculum Merdeka, in learning must focus on Student-Centered Learning. It means that students must be more active than the teacher and always involve in the teaching and learning process.

The teacher tends to ask students making a paragraph after explanation. In addition, the students are asked to listen carefully to the explanation and then make a paragraph based on what have explained by the teacher. It made the students sometimes feel bored because the process of learning is not interesting since they were not being involved in the teaching and learning process. The technique use by the teacher in writing skills can make it difficult for students to express and express their ideas in writing. When students are not given opportunities to think creatively or participate in interactive learning, they may not develop critical and innovative thinking skills. Therefore, in the learning process the teacher's technique greatly influences the success.

To solve the problem of the students, the researcher finds an interesting and effective teaching strategy to help them

generating and organizing the idea into a good paragraph by using roundtable technique. Roundtable technique can make students active and able to work together as a team. Roundtable technique are part of a cooperative learning strategy, and many studies have proven that this kind of technique can have a significant effect on improving students' writing achievement. Roundtable is a technique in which students are guided through writing. Roundtable also can be used to motivate and help the students construct a good paragraph. Roundtable is a group work strategy. It means that the students do their tasks in a group cooperatively.

Olsen and Kagan in Richards & Rodgers (2014) define cooperative learning as an instructional approach in which learners work in group to accomplish a shared task. Lou (2005) states cooperative learning encourages students to work in a group. It makes them work together. This strategy also makes writing easier for the students because they can share their ideas and put them together with their friends. Roundtables are an effective technique for improving students' writing skills so that students can express their ideas and creativity in written form, such as writing descriptive paragraphs.

The strength of the roundtable technique lies in its ability to facilitate open communication, collaboration, and consensus-building among participants. Roundtable discussions encourage dialogue, allowing everyone an equal opportunity to participate in a circular seating arrangement that promotes equality. This fosters collaborative problem-solving, leveraging diverse perspectives and expertise to generate innovative solutions. Through discussion and debate, participants work towards consensus, ensuring that all viewpoints are considered regardless of hierarchy or background. This inclusivity promotes engagement and active participation, leading to increased motivation and commitment to the discussion's goals. Moreover, roundtable discussions are flexible and adaptable to various purposes and settings, offering valuable networking opportunities for participants to connect and collaborate.

Based on background of the study, the researcher tried to apply roundtable technique in teaching writing. The researcher considers roundtable technique is the appropriate teaching technique and media to improve students' writing skills. Through the circular table-type cooperative model, students are expected to be able to actively interact with their group mates. The circular

table-type cooperative model is also a fun learning method because heterogeneous ideas or ideas combine to minimize difficulties in learning to write exposition texts. Thus, it was expected that students would more easily express their thoughts and feelings with the help of various ideas from their group mates.

RESEARCH METHODS

Pre-test and post-test. Both of the tests were constructed in the form of paragraph descriptive test. The subjects were asked to write a genre-based paragraph based on the provided topics. The subjects' paragraphs were carefully scored by using an analytical scoring rubric which had five criteria: format, punctuation and mechanics, content, organization, and grammar and sentence structure. In addition, to quantify the subjects' responses on the implementation of the technique, the researcher administered a questionnaire which consisted of ten items. The questionnaire was in the form of structured questionnaire which had five choices: strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings were to answer the research problem which was previously

determined. The results were obtained through the process of collecting the data that were gathered by using research instruments. The researchers decided to conduct a study on the seventh-grade students of SMPN 7 Denpasar, and the subjects consisted of 40 students. They were selected as research subjects because they had a problem with writing and needed an improvement to achieve the minimum passing grade. The researcher used classroom action research as the research design. The findings are referred to the subjects' achievement after a series of data collection processes based on the of this research.

In the present study, the data were collected by administering the pre-test, post-tests, and questionnaire. The pre-test was administered to the subjects before the roundtable technique was applied to figure out the subjects' pre-existing achievement in writing. Moreover, it was used to know the problems which were faced by the subjects in writing skills especially writing descriptive paragraphs. After administering the pre-test, the post-test was administered at the end of each cycle, cycle I and cycle II. The post-tests were administered to know the subjects' progressing achievement in writing a descriptive paragraph after being taught by using roundtable. The

questionnaire was administered at the end of the last cycle or in cycle II to figure out the responses of the subjects after being taught through roundtable.

After carrying out the cyclical process which was carried out in several steps of classroom action study, the findings of the present study were described in this part. The data from the pre-test and post-tests showed the ability of the subjects in writing a descriptive paragraph and indicated whether there was an improvement of the subjects' writing skill. There were three sets of findings which were collected were tabulated on the tabulation of data as follows:

Pre-cycle

In pre-cycle, the researcher interviewed the English teacher who taught the seventh-grade students of SMPN 7 Denpasar in academic year 2024/2025 to find out the pre-existing data which showed the subjects' writing ability. Besides, the researcher was allowed to conduct the observation during the teaching and learning process. To ensure the data, the researcher administered a pre-test to the subjects. The data were useful for doing the next steps in the present study. Based on the interview, the English teacher said that there were some difficulties faced by the seventh-grade students. The subjects did not understand

clearly about descriptive paragraph and how to describe person, place, or thing. They did not have ideas to write, and they were still confused about how to start writing since their understanding in organization and developing the paragraph was still low. Moreover, the results of the observation showed that some of the subjects were noisy and disturbed the other subjects who were focused on the learning process. In addition, the subjects were asked to write a paragraph without any appropriate guidance. As a result, the subjects writing was less unified and coherent. The English teacher who taught the subjects said that he did not use certain scoring rubrics in scoring writing skills. The teacher believed that the length of the paragraph can reflect the abilities of the subjects without considering the organization and the other criteria.

Based on the data above, the mean score of the pre-test was followed by 40 subjects was 51.93. It meant that the mean score of the pre-test was in line with the result of the interview which also showed low writing ability of the subjects especially in writing a descriptive paragraph. Furthermore, the data of the pre-test showed that there was none of the subjects who could achieve the minimum passing grade in SMPN 7 Denpasar that was 60.50. This result also found that most of the subjects

faced difficulties in the content of the paragraph especially on how to write a unified and coherent descriptive paragraph. Moreover, they could not write a descriptive paragraph with good organization. The subject still has difficulty organizing paragraphs and still has difficulty translating which affects grammar. Since the results of the pre-test showed that the subjects' ability in writing was still low, it indicated that further improvement was really needed. Therefore, the researcher tried to improve the subjects' writing skills through the implementation of roundtable technique in the cyclical process by starting cycle 1.

Cycle I

The mean score of the post-test in cycle I which was followed by 40 subjects was 71.50. It showed that the subjects' ability in writing was still low even though there was improvement from pre-cycle. The subjects were still confused about developing their ideas into a paragraph; However, some of the subjects could write a descriptive paragraph with good description, correct punctuation, and mechanics, and correct generic structure. The data also showed that there were 30 subjects who could achieve the minimum passing grade for the seventh-grade students of SMPN 7 Denpasar. It means that the success indicator was not yet reached in this cycle because a minimum of

32 students out of 40 must achieve the minimum passing grade. The result of the subject score was lower than the passing grade. Therefore, the researcher decided to continue to the next cycle that was cycle II with the purpose of getting a better improvement.

Cycle II

Based on the formula above, the mean score was 78.87. In addition, it showed that there was high improvement on the subjects' writing ability after implementation of roundtable. The researcher revised the planning to get a better result from the subjects' writing skill. In cycle II the researcher gives more list of adjectives related to the topic which was discussed. It was also very helpful to brainstorm and make the subjects easier to make descriptive paragraphs. Some subjects generated their ideas well; moreover, they could write a descriptive paragraph more unified and coherent. They also became more active to ask questions if they got confused or did not understand what had been explained. Besides, the subjects were more focused on studying especially in writing their paragraphs. From 40 subjects, 36 of the subjects could reach the minimum passing grade. The results of post-test 2 showed that the success indicator of the present study which was stated in chapter III was

successfully achieved. Then the present study was ended in this cycle.

The present classroom action research was also intended to quantify the subjects' responses on the implementation of the technique. Thus, the researcher administered a questionnaire to the subjects. The questionnaire was constructed in the form of structured questionnaire on the basis of Likert rating scale 1-5. It consisted of five alternative choices; strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree and it had ten items. The data that were collected by using the questionnaire were analyzed in the form of percentages and they were then descriptively presented.

The results of the questionnaire also clearly indicated the effectiveness of roundtable technique in improving writing skills particularly descriptive paragraphs. It could be proven from the amount of the subjects who gave positive responses toward the implementation of roundtable. There were 31.97% of the subjects who strongly agreed with the implementation roundtable; 61.74% of the subjects, agreed; 6.27% of the subjects, uncertain; 0% of the subjects who disagreed and 0% strongly disagreed. The findings of the pre-test and post-tests which showed significant improvements of the subjects in writing skill were also in line with the results of the questionnaire. It

showed that most subjects responded positively to the implementation of Roundtable technique to improve writing skills. During the learning process, the application of this strategy could build and create a good atmosphere to increase the subjects' interest in writing especially descriptive paragraph. This is beneficial for the subjects to develop ideas in their minds through a piece of paper. It could then help them create their confidence to write well because they can clearly write descriptive paragraphs during teaching and learning.

In the pre-cycle, the researcher conducted observations on the English course at SMPN 7 Denpasar to find out the existing data of the subject. Based on the interview, the English teacher said that the subjects did not understand clearly about descriptive paragraph and their understanding in organizing and developing the paragraph was still low. Moreover, the results of the observation showed that some of the subjects were noisy and disturbed the other subjects. From those initial data, the researcher administered the pre-test. The mean score of pre-tests which was followed by 40 subjects under study in pre-cycle was 60.50. None of the subjects could achieve the minimum passing grade and it showed that their writing ability was still low. Most of them faced difficulties in the content of

the paragraph about how to write a unified and coherent descriptive paragraph. They also found it difficult in organization. Therefore, it needs to be improved by conducting the cyclical process.

In cycle I, after roundtable technique was applied, the writing skill of the subject's showed improvement. The result of the post-test which was followed by 40 subjects in cycle I showed the mean figure of 70.50. Some of the subjects could write a descriptive paragraph in an appropriate way and better than the pre-cycle. Moreover, they could write based on the generic structure, correct, mechanic, on the other hand, the subject still could not write in unity and coherence. The results of the post-test 1 showed only 19 subjects who could achieve the minimum passing grade.

In cycle II, the subjects became more active, and they could enjoy the learning process in the classroom because the researcher revised the planning to get a better result from the subjects' writing skills. The researcher revised the topic into a more challenging one. The topic made the subjects easier to generate the idea and made them more interested. Furthermore, the topic that would be described was familiar to the subjects' idea, it was about people. In addition, many types of sentences could be used to describe about a person. Therefore,

the subjects generated their ideas well and they could construct a descriptive paragraph in good organization and content. The subjects could also write unified and coherent paragraphs. The mean score that was achieved by 40 subjects showed the increasing mean figure of 78.87. It also showed that 36 of 40 subjects could achieve the minimum passing grade of the seventh-grade students of SMPN 7 Denpasar. In addition, it could be stated that the success indicator in the present study was achieved. As a result, the research was ended in this cycle.

Beside the tests, there were also the additional data of the questionnaire which was administered to figure out the responses of the subjects after applying the technique. This figure showed that 31.97% of total subjects who strongly agreed with the implementation of roundtable, 61,74% of the subjects, agreed; 6.27% of the subjects, uncertain; 0% of the subjects, who disagreed and 0%, who strongly disagreed. It meant that most of the subjects responded positively with the application of roundtable. Moreover, it showed that the subjects under study could accept the implementation of roundtable; it affected the subjects to get the improvement in writing ability.

Based on the findings above, it could be stated that the writing skills of the

seventh-grade students of SMPN 7 Denpasar in academic year 2024/2025 can be improved through roundtable. In addition, it was supported by the results of questionnaire which showed the subjects' responses that were positive towards the application of roundtable.

CONCLUSION

In this study, the researcher used classroom action research. It helped the subjects improve their abilities. The present classroom action study was conducted in improving descriptive paragraph writing of the seventh-grade students of the SMPN 7 Denpasar. In addition, the researcher used Roundtable technique to improve the students' writing skills.

The teaching and learning process was divided into two cycles where each cycle consisted of two sessions. The data obtained by conducting the cyclical process was started by administering pre-test in pre-cycle to figure out the subjects' pre-existing ability in writing. It can be seen from the results of post-test at the end of cycle I and cycle II to know the progressing writing achievement after applying roundtable technique in teaching and learning process in the classroom. The mean figures in cycle 1 and cycle 2 were 70.50 and 78.87. The mean score from the pre-test to the post-test clearly

showed the significant subjects writing skill improvement of the roundtable.

As what has been discussed in the previous chapter, there was an improvement of the mean score of the subjects from pre-test to post-test 1. The number of subjects who reached the minimum passing grade also improved compared with the result in post-test 1. All the subjects could achieve the minimum passing grade from pre-cycle to cycle II. The results of the questionnaire also showed the subjects' positive responses with the implementation of roundtable. It means this technique was very well accepted by the subjects.

Based on the findings which have been summed up above, it can be concluded that the writing skills of the seventh-grade students of SMPN 7 Denpasar in academic year 2024/2025 can be improved through roundtable. This technique could make the subjects more active in the teaching and learning process.

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