GAMES IN WRITING SKILL OF EFL LEARNERS: DO THEY GIVE ANY IMPACT?

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to find out whether or not games affected the ability of EFL learners' descriptive text writing skill. The research was conducted at SMP AN-NURMANIYAH, Tangerang. There were 39 students of 7th grade participated in this study as the sample chosen through cluster random sampling. The study applied quantitative method with pre-experimental research design and used both pre-test and post-test as the instruments in collecting the data. The data was analyzed statistically by using t-test. The result of this study showed; mean of students' pre-test was 54.8 while mean score of their post-test was 82.5. The statistical calculation revealed that the result of t-calculation (t_{cal}) > t-table (t_t), in which t_{cal} obtained was 7.414 while t_t was 2.042 with the significant level of 5% (0.05). Thus, the alternative hypothesis (H_1) was accepted while the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected. Referring to these results, this research study concluded that games gave significant effect to the skill of 7th graders' descriptive text writing.

Keywords: *Descriptive Text, Games as Teaching Aids, Writing Skill*

INTRODUCTION

English is one of the difficult subjects for students since this language is not their first language. Therefore, so many of them feel hesitant in learning, so that the impact is they become unable to understand the lesson or it could even be hated. In fact, in this globalization era, English is very important for everyone because in the world of education, English has been selected as one of the subject that must be mastered by the students of Junior Hight Schools, Senior Hight Schools, and universities considering this language the international language.

English teaching is usually focused on four basic capabilities, namely: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. The other three skills of English at school, students are taught English. Students are required to be creative and active in thinking and doing as much as possible by using writing abilities to express their ideas, thoughts, experiences, and feelings.

In general, people use their writing to express themselves, such as in a newspaper, which is utilized to provide written information. Many students can write text, but only a small percentage of them can produce text based on the text's correct structures and features As Graham and Mc Artur (2013) said, when writing become a part of child's world, there are conevsion that suddenly comes into play

proper way of holding a pencil, punctuation, spelling and grammar. It can be difficult to communicate without using hand gestures or intonation. They must figure out how to get their voice across on paper or on a computer screen. Graham, (2018a) writers utilize this multifaceted skill to learn new concepts, convince others, record facts, create fictional worlds, express sentiments, entertain others, heal psychological wounds, chronicle experiences, and investigate the significance of events and situations. The simplest way to teach writing to young children is to read to them all the time. Have a group discussion about what you're reading. Let them try to figure out what it is the author does to make his or her story compelling (Cannella-Malone et al., 2015). Students' difficulties in writing these can be found when they are required to convey ideas from Indonesian to English. The second issue is that children are unable to deduce the meaning of words or phrases found in writing.

Teaching writing to junior high school students is one of the most difficult aspects of teaching. In Indonesia, junior high school is part of primary education. As it is stated in the curriculum 2013 of English subject that the purposes of teaching. To explain oneself, offer information, persuade, or create a literary work, one must write. There are four reasons why people write. After knowing some of the objectives of teaching writing to 7th grade students and knowing what types of text are used in the learning process. Grade 7 Junior high School students focus on descriptive texts. As we tweet, text, email, and "friend" each other on a variety of social networks and media, writing gives a way to initiate and establish personal connections. The writers need to compose their message with good structures statement so the reader will get the clear message which shared. In learning Because it requires students to comprehend writing standards such as punctuation and grammar, English writing is considered the most sophisticated level of EFL study.

The most difficult aspect of learning a second language is writing. The composition of the classroom has an impact on how writing is taught; as the number of students in a classroom grows, it becomes more difficult to give writing instruction that is responsive to their requirements. I'm not claiming that teachers don't try to meet such obstacles, as evidenced by the fact that when their class has more kids who are having difficulty learning to write, they use more writing instructional approaches, Gillespie et al., (2014). It is based on the use of language

in a strategic and suitable manner, with structural precision and communicative potential (Dar & Khan, 2015). One of the factors that influences writing is teaching aids. There are many types of teaching aids available these days, namely: Visual Aids, Audio Aids, Audio-Visual Aids. And one of fun teaching aids is an Audio Visual games. A game is defined as an activity that has a rule, a goal, and an element of fun; it is seen as a meaningful fun activity (Klimanuva, 2015: 3). Language games are divided into two categories: linguistic games, which emphasize accuracy, and communicative games, which emphasize successful information exchange. According to Davis (2012: 18 – 102), there are several games that can be applied in teaching writing, namely: Chain Game, Wordle Prediction, Brown Bear, Plan and Seeds, and Guessing Game.

In writing, sometimes, students feel bored and find difficult to express their thoughts. At this point, teachers should build interesting and effective learning atmosphere in order to get the students' motivation, interests, and focus. Coker et al., (2016) the repeatedly replicated finding that teachers who dedicate more time to teaching writing use more instructional writing activities more frequently supports this position. In that way, the students' learning performance will be in line with the objective of the lessons. Thus, games can be chosen as one of alternative teaching aids to be introduced to students since games are not only fun but they are also varied, hence the teachers might select some based on the needs of the students and the learning goals. Students can be fully encouraged to learn without feeling burden. Gilbert & Graham, (2010) the lot of what we know about how writing is currently taught in schools comes from surveys in which instructors are asked about their writing instructional strategies. Classroom writing habits are influenced by the beliefs and knowledge of teachers, Graham & Harris, (2018). If teachers are better prepared to teach writing, feel more confidence in their abilities to teach it, enjoy teaching it, and consider it an important skill, they dedicate more time and attention to it, Brindle et al., (2016)

In the context of TEFL in Junior High School especially in Indonesia, descriptive text is one of the texts stated in the curriculum to be taught to the students. Therefore, the students of 7th grade as the first level of this Junior High School of education, are needed to be taken into account by the teachers since their ability in English skills will influence their English achievement when they come

into the higher grades. Based on this reason, the writers were interested to investigate further whether or not games, as one of audio visual aids, can be used to improve EFL learners' descriptive text writing skill, especially the 7th grade ones.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

A. Materials

The writers used a quantitative approach in this investigation. In order to obtain results, a quantitative research method involves quantifying and analyzing variables. These variables are measured using standard research instruments, and the data, which consists of numbers, is evaluated using statistical formula processes. The research design was a pre-experimental design with one group pre-test and post-test. The research was conducted over the course of eight meetings, including a pre-test and post-test.

B. Method

In the first meeting, a pre-test was administered to measure students' descriptive text writing skill before they were being treated by the writers. One picture taken from the students' English text-book was used by the researchers to ask the students to describe it into paragraph. This way of collecting the data was also applied in the post-test which was carried out in the last meeting (meeting 8).

For the other 6 meetings, the students were guided on how to write descriptive text properly based on its structure. 'Guessing Games' were applied by the writers during this experiment period. A guessing game is a game in which an individual or a group attempts to answer a question based on a few keywords associated with the images, titles, or words. This type of game is designed to help students practice asking and answering questions as well as writing. The researchers utilized flashcards or items as their resources. The students took turns guessing and identifying an object by asking and answering questions among themselves in this activity. The students who addressed questions were trained to 'describe' the objects as clearly as possible to be guessed by their friends. Once one object on the

flash-card was correctly guessed, the one who gave the clues was asked to write the descriptions that he/she had previously given to the class. At this stage, the ways the students described an object used by the writers to let them know whether the description given was already right or not, besides, the writers also inserted the description into the structure of descriptive text.

RESULTS

Both of pre- and post-tests were analyzed by the writers to measure the significant results of the experiment. If the results of the students' their post-test score was higher than their pre-test score, then it can be concluded that games gave effects to the skill of the students' descriptive text writing and vice versa.

The following table 1 presented the students' pre-test of descriptive text writing:

Table 1. Students' Pre-test Results of Descriptive Text Writing

	Criteria	Total of Students	Precentage
P1	Passed	15	38.4%
P2	Failed	24	61.5%
Total		39	100%

Based on the results of the pre-test, only 15 students, or 38.4 percent of the students, had a score higher than the Minimum Mastery Criterion (Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal — KKM). From that results, it could be successfully in their descriptive test the other 24 students, on the other hand, did not satisfy that condition. It was obvious from that analysis that more than half of the students performed poorly in descriptive text writing. Further, table 2 below presented those students' pre-test results of descriptive writing text:

Table 2. Students' Post-test Results of Descriptive Text Writing

	Criteria	Total of Students	Precentage
P1	Passed	39	100%
P2	Failed	0	0%
Total		39	100%

The post-test data above showed that all 39 of the students (100 %) received a score that was higher than the Minimum Criteria.

DISCUSSION

In order to make it clearer, the following Diagram 1 pictured the differences gained by the students both in the pre- and post-tests.
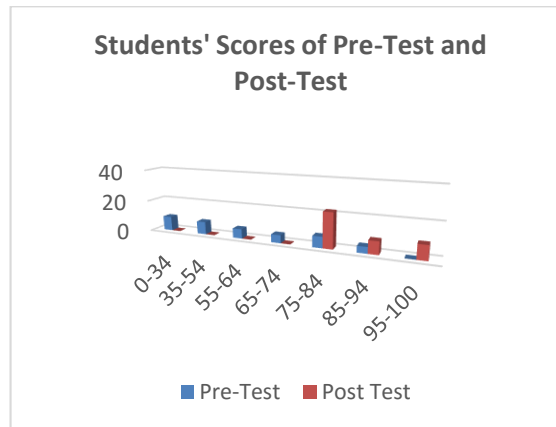
As the writers' objective of the research was to find out whether or not games influenced these students' descriptive text writing skill, a statistical analysis of t-test was applied. At the first step the average student score pre- and post-test results were calculated. The calculation gained 54.8 for the students' pre-test mean score and 82.5 for the post-test. Then, the writers determined mean of difference score of those pre-test and post-test which hit the value of 43.095 (n=39). The next step was determining the value of variance (1.315.78), followed by determining Standard Deviation (36.27). The followings are the final step of determining t-calculation:

$$t = \frac{D}{\frac{SD}{\sqrt{N}}}$$

$$= \frac{43.095}{\frac{36.27}{\sqrt{39}}} \qquad = \frac{43.095}{5.8125}$$

$$= 7.414$$

In order to decide whether or not games gave impact to students' descriptive text writing skill, or to determine the hypothesis, the writers converted that t_{cal} score to t_{table} in the significance level of 5% (0.05), as presented in table 3 below:

Table 3. The Hypothesis Test

t-calculation	t-table	Significance
7.414	2.042	Significant

It can be seen from table 3 that the score of t_{cal} (7.414) was higher than the score of t_{table} (2.042), hence null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected. This result assumed that there was significant effect of playing games in developing students' descriptive text writing ability.

CONCLUSION

This research aimed to find out the effect of games in the skill of students' descriptive text writing. The writers used pre- and post-test as the tools in collecting the data. The statistical analysis of t_{test} revealed that t_{cal} value (7.414) was higher than t_{table} (2.042), in the significant level of 5% (0.05). Therefore, the study concluded that games significantly affected students' descriptive text writing skill. In this case, 7th graders of SMP AN-NURMANIYAH, Jakarta, as the subjects of the research. Games helped teachers to avoid student boredom and maximize their participation in the teaching and learning process writing, it is one of the most difficult abilities to master in a language, will be made more entertaining and enjoyable by using games. However, teachers should provide clear instructions, be consistent, and have complete control over the teaching and learning process by using games, so that students do not become distracted by the pleasure and lose focus of the lesson's goal.

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