

IMPROVING STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN WRITING ANALYTICAL EXPOSITION THROUGH DEBATE TECHNIQUE

Nova Diana Simbolon

Siti Aisah Ginting

ABSTRACT

This study attempts to improve students' achievement in writing Analytical Exposition through Debate Technique. This study was conducted by using classroom action research. The subject of the research was class XI IPA-1 SMAN 1 Pancur Batu consisting of 36 students. The research was conducted in two cycles and consisted of six meetings. The instruments for collecting data were writing tests as the quantitative data and diary notes, observation sheet, and interview sheet as qualitative data. Based on the writing score, students' scores kept improving in every test. In the first cycle test, the mean of writing score was 61,67. In the second cycle test the mean of writing score was 71,36. Based on diary notes, observation sheet and questionnaire sheet, it was found that students were actively involved in writing process. The result of the research showed that Debate Technique can improve students' achievement in writing Analytical Exposition.

Keywords: Debate Technique, Writing, Analytical Exposition, Action research

INTRODUCTION

The Background of the Study

Speaking and writing are skills that can be used by humans to express their thoughts as what Clark and Clark (1977: 3) says that there are two ways to convey thoughts, feelings or perceptions, the first is speaking and the second is writing; both of them are also known as language productions.

There are some differences between speaking and writing, they are the time and space, participants, the process, organization and language, signs and symbols, and the product. Speaking is done directly thus when speakers are speaking; they have to be able to pick the words to be used based on the participants. Since speaking is done in a quite quick time, the errors made by the speakers such as mispronounce will be tolerated without judging the speakers' level of intelligent. In the other hand, writing tends to be permanent, so the writers have to be able to pick up the words which can be understood until a period of time by the readers whom the writers do not know. Moreover, the writers have to be able to use the simple yet powerful signs and symbol, and fewer errors in their writing; because the mistakes will lead the judgment toward their level of intelligent. From the differences explained above, it can be concluded that writing is not as easy speaking, it is tougher.

In the context of education, writing is very important since in most of exams, whether they are testing foreign language abilities or other skills, often rely on the students' writing proficiency in order to measure their knowledge. However, most of the students consider that writing is the most difficult language skill to master of the four language skills. The writers could see this problem when she had her teaching training (PPL) in Binjai. The students complained if they were asked to make writing about a certain topic, even some of them refused to do it in by making reasons that they would never be able to write. The biggest problem for the students which causes them not being able to write is, they do not know what to write; and even though few of them know what to write, they do not know how to write. The problem is even getting bigger for the students when they are assigned to write Analytical Exposition which contains

about the issues which is usually controversial and needs logical and critical thinking about it. Sometimes they have some ideas but they are confused how to write it well in analytical exposition text.

In order to overcome this problem, the writer would like to propose debate technique as the way to improve students' achievement in writing analytical exposition text. The writer chooses this technique because it stimulates the students to think critically about an issue, so the result of their thinking can be used as the starting idea to write. Besides, provides the detail format which will be able to lead the students to write their ideas. Debate technique is also effective to be applied in writing as Snider and Schnurer (2002:19) say that a debate is a communication event, where the mode of operation is oral or written communication and serves as performance as well as the method of transmitting ideas and arguments. A debate is composed two or more "sides" of an issue, where the advocacy positions are identified in advance. Besides, Hyland (2002:78) says that fundamentally, writing is learnt, rather than taught, and the teachers' best methods are flexibility and support. This means responding to the specific instructional context, particularly the age, first language and experience of the students, their writing purposes, and their target writing communities, and providing extensive encouragement in the form of meaningful context, peer involvement, prior texts, useful feedback and guidance in the writing process.

There are some goals of debate, especially classroom debate, according to Snider and Schnurer (2002:46-57):

1. Engage students in the subject matter.

Debate provides a great opportunity to get students excited about the subjects they are studying. Debate calls upon the students simultaneously to perform their knowledge and to be informed.

2. Operationalize the issues of the subject matter.

One of the chief benefits of debate is the transformation of knowledge into a useful form that students can operationalize. This simply means that through debate, students become adept at the application of the knowledge of the classroom.

3. Create advocacy-oriented education.

Debate teaches the students how to argue for and defend ideas. This lesson is central to the success of public life. It is fundamentally about researching, thinking and organizing, and advocating; skills that are fantastic primer for public advocacy.

4. Teaching persuasion skills.

The performance elements of debate require that students not only be aware of the vital arguments and logic of their side, but also of the subtle techniques associated with persuasion. One of the most impressive persuasive techniques that debate teaches is confidence.

5. Teaching critical thinking.

Critical thinking is the active skill of applying knowledge to new problem and controversies. Debate encourages the students to seek out their own understanding and often to challenge ideas by researching and critiquing the foundation of arguments. This process is a fundamental to critical thinking.

6. Create positive classroom atmosphere.

Debate helps to create this kind of atmosphere in the classroom by getting students involved and rewarding their interest with the public debate performances; because they are responsible for their own performances, they become more involved in the educational process.

7. Create new patterns of knowledge.

Debate encourages students (and teachers) to think new thoughts since the very nature of debate as an activity creates new cognitive spaces for all involved. Even the preparation for debate creates new knowledge to participants. Students who are assigned to defend the arguments they do not know very much about (or they disagree with) will benefit from the research process where they get opportunity to learn about new concepts that they may have never considered.

8. Have fun

Debate represents an opportunity to share the work of teaching with students. Instead of teaching in front of the classroom, teachers can help to guide the students who are teaching other students through their debate. It can be enjoyable because teachers can see an actualization of knowledge that they can help to share. Debates are enjoyable for students because they are in charge of their own learning and get to follow

their interests. When they discover something new, they can share that knowledge and receive the praise of the community of their peers.

In this study, the writer would like to focus the students' interaction through substantive writing by using analytical exposition as the genre. Actually writing the ideas is the common way used by debaters before they deliver their substantive speech. In writing the ideas, they use some steps called as AREL which stands for Assertion, Reasoning, Evidence, and Link back. AREL format can help the students to improve their writing ability because it directs the students to focus on what should be written. It can be seen from the definition of each step in the format. Assertion is the idea or statement towards the issue given. Reasoning is the brief and logical reason of the assertion. Evidence is about showing the facts related to the reason. The last is Link back which is about how the debaters can see the logic relation among reason and evidence to the assertion. The students' motivation will increase since besides getting the direction in writing, they also can experience the positive atmosphere of learning which is created by debate technique itself. The writer believes that by applying debate technique which contains AREL steps can help the students to enhance their logical thinking and how to write the ideas systematically in analytical exposition text.

The main activity of this strategy is to place the students in two different sides, positive and negative. They will be asked to write their argument toward a certain topic and their response or rebuttal toward their opponent's argument in the genre Analytical Exposition by applying AREL format in writing their argument.

The focus of using this strategy is to improve the ability in writing Analytical Exposition, but this strategy can also develop the students' ability to work in team and think critically. That is why it is encouraged for the teachers to apply Debate Technique in order to improve students' writing achievement.

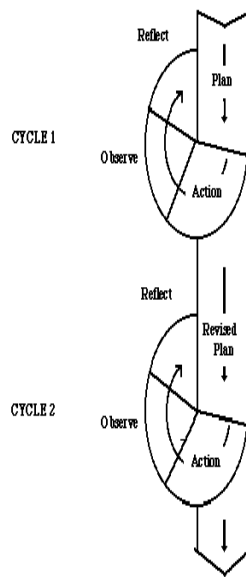
Therefore, the problem of the study is *“Does the use of debate technique significantly improve students' achievement in writing analytical exposition?”*

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study applied classroom action research. Kemmis and McTaggart in Kemmis and McTaggart et.al (2002:125) define that action research is collective, self reflective inquiry that participants in social situations undertake to improve (1) the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices; (2) the participants' understanding of these practices and situations in which they carry out these practices. Groups of participants can be teachers, students, parents, workplace colleagues, social activists, or any other community members- that are any group with the shared concern and the motivation and will to address their shared concern. The approach is action research only when it is collaborative and achieved through the critically examined action of individual group members. According to Ferrance (2001:7), action research is the process in which participants examine their own educational practice systematically and carefully. Action research refers to a disciplined inquiry done by a teacher with the intent that the research will inform and change his or her practices in the future.

According to Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) in Burns (2010:7) action research typically involves four broad phases in a cycle of research. The first cycle may become a continuing, or *iterative*, spiral of cycles which recur until the action researcher has achieved a satisfactory outcome and feels it is time to stop. In the other words, the second cycle will be done only when the means of the score does not increase significantly in the first cycle. There are four phases in this research; they are planning, action, observation, and reflection. The four phases in action research can be seen in the following figure.



Cyclical action research model based on Kemmis and Mc.Taggart (1988) in Burns (2010:9)

This action research was conducted at SMAN 1 Pancur Batu, which is located on Jalan Jamin Ginting Pancur Batu. The sample of the research was one class which consists of 36 students (XI IPA-1).

In this study, the data were collected by qualitative and quantitative approach. The qualitative data was conducted to know the situation during the teaching process and the quantitative data was used to analyze the students' score.

In collecting the quantitative data, writing test was conducted to the students based on the evaluation of the components of the writing test, such as: organization, language use, and AREL format. The students were asked to write an Analytical Exposition through Debate Technique.

While, in collecting the qualitative data, interview sheet, observation sheet and diary notes were used. By using diary notes, questionnaire, interview sheet and observation, the situation of the students including the background of the problems in writing Analytical Exposition were found.

The procedure of collecting data was by conducting two cycles. The first cycle was conducted in three meetings and the second cycle was conducted in three meetings, so there were six meetings all together.

The quantitative data was analyzed by computing the score of writing test. The components for scoring writing test were content, organization, language use and AREL format.

The mean of the students' score for each cycle was obtained using the application of the following formula:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N} \times 100\%$$

Where:

\bar{X} = the mean of the students' score

$\sum X$ = the total score

N = the number of the students

Next, to categorize the number of the students who were competent in recount writing, the following formula was applied:

$$P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100\%$$

Where:

P = the percentage of those who get point up to 75

R = the number of those who got point up to 75

T = the total number of the students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Data

This research involved quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data was obtained from 3 essay tests. The first essay test was given in the very first meeting to know the lack of the students in writing analytical exposition text. This was called orientation test. The students were given thirty minutes to finish the test. The second essay test was given in the third meeting and the students were also given thirty minutes to finish. The topic was different than the first one but still quite familiar with the students. The third essay test was given in the last meeting which was the sixth meeting. For this last test, the students were given the same time but the different topic. The qualitative data was obtained from the diary notes, observation sheet, and interview sheets. The data were taken from a class which consisted of 36 students.

Since the data of the students' achievement was not significantly improved in one cycle, it was needed to conduct the next cycle. So, this research was accomplished in two cycles. The first cycle including the pre test was conducted in three meetings. The second cycle was conducted in three meetings, so there were six meetings altogether.

The Data Analysis

Analysis of quantitative data

The students' score increased from the first writing test to the last writing test. It can be seen in the table below.

Students' Scores in Three Writing Tests

NO.	Students Initial	Test I (Pre-Test)	Test II Cycle 1	Test III Cycle 2
1	FR	70	75	82
2	MOG	50	80	80
3	MF	60	75	78
4	BR	55	80	85
5	AM	55	70	87
6	AAD	65	75	77
7	MSF	50	55	63
8	IM	45	70	73
9	AAS	30	50	55
10	SES	35	75	77
11	ADS	30	50	50
12	DSW	35	70	90
13	JM	25	50	60
14	AMT	65	70	92
15	CCM	65	75	78
16	IPD	25	40	50
17	SAS	20	40	50
18	EDP	45	65	78
19	NH	25	45	75
20	RPS	85	90	96
21	RKB	70	75	78
22	SCG	25	40	50
23	HF	40	45	60
24	EA	30	50	50
25	NB	25	50	50
26	IP	30	65	75
27	VR	25	40	58
28	DK	40	50	70
29	MSF	40	55	65
30	RG	45	45	65
31	ARA	65	90	92
32	DL	25	55	80
33	AG	55	70	75
34	RGP	60	75	75

35	RS	35	55	72
36	RA	35	60	78
TOTAL		1515	2220	2596
MEAN		42,08	61,67	71,36

The improvement of the students' achievement in writing Analytical Exposition through Debate Technique could be seen from the mean of the students' score during the research, the following formula was applied:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

Where \bar{X} = the mean of the students
 $\sum x$ = the total score
 N = the number of the students

In pre-test, the total score of the students was 1425 and the number of the students was 36, so the mean was:

$$X = \frac{1515}{36} = 42,08$$

In first post-test, the total score of the students was 2220 and the number of the students were 36, so the mean was:

$$X = \frac{2220}{36} = 61,67$$

In second competence test, the total score of the students was and the number of the students was , so the mean was:

$$X = \frac{2569}{36} = 71,36$$

The mean of the students' score in the second post-test of writing, so it could be said that the students' achievement in writing Analytical Exposition through Debate Technique increased from 42,08 to 71,36 The number of master students was calculated by applying the following formula:

$$P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100\%$$

Where P = the percentage of the students

R = the number of the students who get the point above 75

T = the total number of students who do test.

The percentage of the improvement of the students' achievement in writing Analytical Exposition could be seen as the follows:

In test I ,
$$P = \frac{1}{36} \times 100\% = 2,78\%$$

In test II (cycle 1),
$$P = \frac{11}{36} \times 100\% = 30,56\%$$

In test III (cycle 2),
$$P = \frac{20}{36} \times 100\% = 55,56\%$$

The result of the research indicated that there was a significant improvement on the students' achievement in writing Analytical Exposition through Debate Technique. After collecting the data, the mean of the orientation test was still low (42,08) and then the cycle I was done.

After doing the action through Debate Technique in cycle I, the result of the first post-test had increased from 42.08 to 61.67. Then, after giving action in cycle II, the result of the second post-test had increased more significantly (71.36). It implied that Debate Technique was effective in improving students' achievement in writing Analytical Exposition.

Analysis of qualitative data

As it has been explained before, the qualitative data were taken from the diary notes, interview sheet, and observation sheet. The interview sheet showed the students interest to learn writing Analytical Exposition through Debate Technique. There were two interviews conducted. The two interviews were conducted by asking questions to the students. The first interview sheets were used to analyze the students' difficulty in writing and their knowledge about Analytical Exposition and Debate. The second one was used to know the students' opinion after Debate Technique was applied. From the first interview, it was found that the students thought that writing was difficult and boring, and it was because of being lack of vocabulary, afraid of making grammatical error, and confused of what and how to write. It was even more difficult to them to

write their own analysis in Analytical Exposition. However, in the second interview, it was found that the students got more courage to write and to analyze a certain topic since they found that the atmosphere of learning was more challenging and the steps to write were easier to follow. The observation sheet showed the behaviors of the students and teacher while the research was conducted. It showed that most students were enthusiastic and involved well in the teaching learning process. Their enthusiasm and ability in writing were not so significant in cycle I, but they were improved in the second cycle, and the students were more motivated to write their thoughts. Last, the diary notes showed the situation of the class during learning and teaching process. From the diary notes, it was found that there were some differences in the learning situation in the first and second cycle. In the first cycle, there were only some students who really got involved and were interested to write their arguments. Some of them were less enthusiastic. In the second cycle, there were only few of them who still were not so enthusiastic, but most of them were enthusiastic, active to ask the feedback, and more motivated to write their arguments by using AREL format in Debate Technique.

Research Findings

Based on the research, it was proved that the data showed the mean of the students' score increased in every test. In the last competence test, the mean was 71.36. It was higher than the second competence test 61.67, and also the first competence test 42.08. The finding of this research showed that Debate Technique was able to improve the students' achievement in writing Analytical Exposition.

The researcher also analyzed qualitative data to support the research finding beside the quantitative data. Diary notes, interview sheet, and observation sheet supported that Debate Technique was able to improve the students' achievement in writing Analytical Exposition. From the diary notes, it was found that the situation of teaching and learning process was better from the first to the last meeting. The students were active, paid attention a lot and did the work seriously. Then, from the observation sheet, it can be seen the situation of teaching and learning was good enough and the students were enthusiastic enough in doing their task and in getting involved in the process.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

After analyzing the data, it was found out that the students' achievement in writing analytical exposition score increased from the first cycle to the second cycle. It meant that there was an improvement on the students' achievement in writing analytical exposition by applying Debate Technique. The analysis of quantitative data showed that the scores improved from the first test to the last test eventually. Furthermore, it was also proved through the observation sheet, interview sheet, and diary notes which indicate there was an improvement in learning result through applying Debate Technique in teaching and learning process from the first cycle to the second cycle. Therefore, Debate Technique significantly improves the students' achievement in writing Analytical Exposition.

Suggestions

The result of this study shows that the use of Debate Technique improves the students' achievement in writing Analytical Exposition text. These following suggestions are offered:

1. For the English teachers; it is better to use Debate Technique in teaching writing Analytical Exposition because this technique helps the teachers in motivating and encouraging the students to think critically and the technique provides the guidance for the students on how to write arguments well.
2. For the students; it is suggested to be more confident in exploring their ideas toward a certain issue and they should not be worried to write their ideas although their ideas are quite simple.
3. For all the readers; this research can contribute a good understanding of how to improve their achievement in writing Analytical Exposition through Debate Technique.
4. For the other researchers; it is suggested that this technique should be researched more in other skills, for instance, speaking.

REFERENCES

- Burns, A. 2010. *Doing Action Research in English Language Teaching*. Routledge Taylor and Francis Group: New York.
- Clark, H. H. & Clark E. V. 1997. *Psychology and Language*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Ferrance, E. 2001. *Action Research*. USA: LAB Brown University.
- Harmer, J. 2004. *How to Teach Writing*. Malaysia: Longman.
- Harmer, J. 2003. *The Practice of English Language Teaching, Third Edition*. Malaysia: Longman.
- Hyland, K. 2003. *Second Language Writing*. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.
- Hyland, K. 2002. *Teaching and Researching Writing*. Malaysia: Longman.
- Kemmis, S., McTaggart R., Altrichter H., Skerritt O. Z. 2002. The Concept of Action Research. *The Learning Organization*. Volume 9. Number 3. Page 125-126.
- Snider, A. & Schnurer M. 2002. *Many Sides Debate across the Curriculum*. New York: The International Debate Education Association.
2010. *Action Research in Education Guideline (2nd edition)*. Australia: New South Wales, Department of Education and Training.
- <http://www.englishteacherguru.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/09/deconstructed-exposition-model.pdf>. 2012. Accessed on March 28th.