

The use of Think-Talk-Write (TTW) strategy and its effect on the tenth grade students' ability in writing descriptive text

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ABSTRAK

Masalah umum yang dihadapi pembelajar EFL dalam menulis adalah kurangnya kosakata, keterbatasan pemahaman tata bahasa, dan pengembangan ide. Strategi pengajaran alternatif untuk membantu mereka meringankan masalah ini adalah strategi Think-Talk-Write (TTW). Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkonfirmasi apakah penggunaan strategi TTW yang dikombinasikan dengan media audio-visual memberikan pengaruh secara signifikan terhadap kemampuan menulis deskriptif siswa. Secara keseluruhan, empat puluh enam siswa kelas sepuluh di sekolah menengah swasta berpartisipasi dalam penelitian ini, dan mereka dikelompokkan pada kelas eksperimen (IPA 1) dan kontrol (IPA 2), masing-masing terdiri dari 23 siswa. Pemilihan sample didasarkan pada kebijakan sekolah yang hanya mengizinkan kelas IPA 1 dan IPA sebagai sample penelitian. Kelas eksperimen diajarkan dengan menggunakan strategi TTW, dan kelas kontrol diajarkan dengan menggunakan strategi Mind Mapping (MM). Pre-tes dan post-tes diberikan sebelum dan sesudah siswa menerima perlakuan. Data dianalisis secara kuantitatif. Secara statistik, hasil pre-tes menunjukkan bahwa tidak ada perbedaan skor antara kedua kelompok siswa ($t = .58, p > .05$). Namun, perbedaan skor yang signifikan antara kedua kelompok didapat untuk post-tes ($t = 4.42, p < .05$). Hasil ini menunjukkan bahwa strategi TTW yang dikombinasikan dengan media audio-visual memberikan pengaruh terhadap peningkatan kemampuan menulis deskriptif siswa; sehingga dapat menjadi salah satu strategi yang efektif bagi guru bahasa Inggris dalam mengajarkan descriptive writing.

ABSTRACT

The use of Think-Talk-Write (TTW) strategy and its effect on the tenth grade students' ability in writing descriptive text. Common problems facing EFL learners in writing are lack of vocabulary, limited grammar understanding, and idea development. An alternative teaching strategy to help them alleviate these problems is a Think-Talk-Write (TTW) strategy. This study investigates the effectiveness of the use of the TTW strategy combined with audio-visual media in improving the students' descriptive writing ability. Forty-six tenth-grade students at a private senior high school participated in this study, and they were divided into experimental (IPA 1) and control (IPA 2) classes, each consisted of 23 students. Sample selection was made based on the school policy, which gave only two out of six classes as samples of this study. The experimental group was instructed by using a TTW strategy, and the control group was taught by using a Mind Mapping (MM) strategy. Pre-test and post-test were administered before and after the students received the treatments. The data were analyzed quantitatively. The result of the pre-test shows that there was no statistically different writing score between the two groups of students ($t = .58, p > .05$). However, a significant difference in scores between the two groups emerged for the post-test ($t = 4.42, p < .05$). This result suggests that the TTW strategy combined with audio-visual media can be an effective strategy that can be used by English teachers in teaching descriptive writing.

Keywords:

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Introduction

Some of the students' problems in writing descriptive text include lack of vocabulary and limited grammar understanding. When students have a limited vocabulary, they have difficulty in developing their ideas, especially in writing. They cannot express their meaning into writing form so that the readers have problems in understanding the text. The other problem is that EFL learners have limited grammar understanding. This problem can occur because English has different rules than the language that they dominantly use so that the students have to understand the grammar. EFL learners are less accustomed to using these rules. Therefore, an English teacher in a class must be able to know the solution to these problems.

In the teaching-learning process in a class, the students need an effective way to learn so that they can be easier to understand the materials. According to researchers (e.g., Wirda, Setiawan, & Hidayat, 2017), one teaching strategy which can help the students is Think-Talk-Write (TTW) strategy. TTW strategy is developed through thinking, talking, and writing activities which help students to involve problem-solving in a small group. This strategy also helps students to participate, think creatively, work together, and provide the opportunity for students to work independently and cooperate with others (Wirda, Setiawan, & Hidayat, 2017).

A TTW strategy was introduced by Huinker and Laughlin (1996). This strategy provides an opportunity to train students' oral and written language abilities. The TTW strategy also enables the students to read a text, understand information, and built up listening skills when their friends explain ideas. Huinker and Laughlin (1996) say that the TTW strategy gives a chance for the students to organize and test the ideas before the students are expected to write (cf. Zulkarnaini, 2011).

Huinker and Laughlin (1996) clarify that as a teaching strategy, the TTW has three main activities (cf. Sari, Saun, & Rosa, 2014). The first activity is *think*. In this step, the students are asked to think and find some information about the topic. Then, the students write down the ideas using their own language on a piece of paper. The second activity is *talk*. The students are allowed to share and exchange their ideas in a small group consisting of 4-5 students. After they share and discuss the ideas, the last activity is *write*, which allows the students to start writing based on the discussion using their own language.

A teacher holds an important role during the implementation of the TTW strategy. The teacher should be able to manage the class because there are groups that need to be supervised. According to Setiawan, Sujana, and Apgrianto (2017), the teacher's role in the TTW strategy should be as a facilitator by asking questions and giving assignments that capture the students' attention. The teacher should also encourage and challenge the students to think about the topic discussed. The teacher should also be a good listener and provide advice and motivation to the students during the teaching and learning process. The teacher is encouraged to give attitude value scores for each student when he moves around the class.

As a teaching strategy, the TTW has some advantages (Hidayati, Fauzan, & Hakim, 2018). First, it develops meaningful situations to understand teaching materials. Second, by

giving questions, it can improve students' critical and creative thinking skills. Third, the students can learn actively by interacting and discussing with groups. Finally, it familiarizes students to think and communicate with their friends, teachers, and even with themselves.

The other advantage of the TTW strategy is that it makes students participate actively in exploring a problem. This strategy develops thinking, talking, and writing which allows stimulus for the students to study hard and to find information from various sources. The students' social relationships will increase through interaction with their group. The students also can construct their knowledge from the results of the discussion (Sari, Saun, & Rosa, 2014).

The effectiveness of the TTW strategy in teaching descriptive writing has become the concern of several previous studies. A study conducted by Setiawan, Sujana, and Aprianto (2017), for example, investigated the use of the TTW strategy in teaching descriptive writing at a senior high school. The study found that the students who were instructed by using the TTW strategy achieved better descriptive writing scores than the students who were taught using the Presentation Practice Production (PPP) strategy. Based on the result, the researchers argue that the use of the TTW strategy provides a positive effect on the students' descriptive writing ability.

Another study about the effectiveness of the TTW as a teaching strategy was done by Lestari (2015) by employing a classroom action research (CAR) as the method of investigation and junior high school students as the research participants. The study focused on the students' creative thinking in writing narrative text. The research was done in two cycles, and the result indicates that the students' narrative writing ability improved in each cycle. Based on the result, the researcher suggests that TTW can be used as an alternative strategy for teaching narrative writing.

The other study was done by Gofisnovega and Aswandi (2015). The researchers used the TTW strategy combined with pictures as media for teaching descriptive writing. The data were collected through observation and questionnaire and analyzed qualitatively. The result of the observation demonstrates that the use of the TTW strategy combined with pictures as media helps the students improve their descriptive writing ability. The participants also reported their positive responses toward the implementation of the TTW in the classroom.

The findings of the three previous studies above indicate that the use of the TTW strategy provides positive implications on the students' writing ability. However, the first and second research does not provide detailed information about the media used during the data collection. Therefore, it is unknown the roles of the teaching media in the two studies when the TTW strategy was being implemented in the classroom. The third study reported that pictures were used as media during the teaching and learning process. However, pictures are not the only media to enhance the teaching and learning process of descriptive writing. Other media such as videos could provide more detailed information or description of an object. Therefore, an extension study that uses the TTW strategy and videos as media is required to better inform the readers about the effectiveness of the TTW as a teaching strategy for descriptive writing. For the above reasons, the present study will further investigate the effectiveness of the TTW as a teaching strategy and audio-visual media (videos) as teaching media.

A study by Bajrami and Ismaili (2016), for example, found that videos could be used as media and motivational tools in a class. Videos have some advantages if they are appropriately used for teaching. The first advantage is that videos can be more motivating for students because they can attract students' attention and curiosity about the materials to be taught. Second, videos can be entertaining and give an enjoyable experience for learners.

Students get new experiences in learning a descriptive text by using videos in a class. Third, videos also provide training on students' listening skills. Lastly, videos provide more detailed information about an object such as tourism places. In other words, videos can be more powerful and more comprehensible than the other media, such as pictures, for teaching a foreign language.

Methods

The research was conducted at a private senior high school in Malang. The study applied a quasi-experimental design because the participants were not randomly assigned. Forty-six students of tenth grade participated in this study, and they were divided into two classes: experimental (IPA 1) and control (IPA 2). Each class consisted of 23 students. Sample selection was made based on the school policy, which gave only two out of six classes as samples of this study (judgmental sampling). The experimental class was taught by using a TTW strategy, and the control class was taught by using a Mind Mapping (MM) strategy, a strategy that is often used by the English teacher in the two classes. The researchers provided a pre-test and post-test before and after the two classes received different treatments.

The researchers allocated four meetings for each class to collect the data. The data were collected by administering a pre-test, providing treatment, and conducting a post-test in each class. In the first meeting, the experimental and control classes were given a pre-test. This test was conducted for both classes before the students received the treatment. The purpose was to find out the students' writing ability before they were taught using different teaching strategies. In the second, third, and fourth meetings, the researchers provided a different treatment for each group. The experimental class was taught by using the TTW strategy combined with the use of audio-visual media. Firstly, the researchers played a video with the topic 'Coban Rondo' waterfall. Then, the students were requested to collect information as much as possible from the video. The video was played twice. Next, the students were divided into some groups consisting of four to five members each. They were allowed to discuss and exchange information with their group. After that, the students were asked to write a descriptive text using their own words based on the discussion result. The activities in the third and fourth meetings were almost similar to the second meeting except for the topic. The researchers conducted a post-test at the end of the fourth meeting with the topic of 'Wisata Edukasi Milkindo'.

The students in the control class were taught by using a MM strategy. Initially, the researchers gave a brief explanation about the characteristics of descriptive text. Then, the students were divided into some groups consisting of four to five members each. After that, the students were provided some pictures about a topic, and they were requested to draw a mind mapping of information based on the pictures. Finally, the students were requested to write a descriptive text based on the discussion they had before. The activities for the third and fourth meetings were almost the same as the previous meeting.

To evaluate the students' writing descriptive text, the researchers used a rubric adapted from Brown (2007). Please see Appendix 1. There are five aspects evaluated: Content (C), Organization (O), Grammar (G), Vocabulary (V) and Mechanics (M). The maximum score for each aspect is 4, and the minimum score is 1.

The topics of writing used for both pre-test and post-test were based on the syllabus that has been used by the English teacher in the school for the 2018/2019 academic year. The material for writing a descriptive text that is about tourism places around the city is explicitly stated in the syllabus point 3.7 and 4.10. At point 3.7, the students are expected to be able to analyze text structures, language features, and social function of descriptive text about tourism places. At point 4.10, the students are expected to be able to produce a descriptive text about tourism places. The fact that the tests were designed according to the syllabus available in the school, the test validity was fulfilled in this study.

To avoid the subjectivity of the scores provided by the scorers, the researchers employed an inter-rater reliability measure. The participants' writing in the pre-test and post-test were scored by two raters (cf. Multon, 2010; Stemler, 2007). The first-rater was the first researcher, and the second-rater was the English teacher of the classes investigated. The raters scored the participants' writing based on the scoring rubric adapted from Brown (2007). The reliability level of the scores provided by the two raters was measured using Cronbach's Alpha. The results of the reliability measurement were 0.85 for the pre-test and 0.94 for the post-test. These could be categorized as reliable.

To know whether the participants in the two groups have relatively similar descriptive writing ability before the treatments were provided, the researchers conducted a homogeneity test for the students' writing scores in the pre-test. The researchers measured the homogeneity of the sample by using a *Levene* test. The mean score of the test for the experimental group was 62.00 and the control group was 60.65. The significance level of the *Levene* test result was 0.92, $p > 0.05$. This suggests that the participants' descriptive writing ability in the two groups was relatively homogenous or equal.

A *Shapiro-Wilk* test was run to know whether the data obtained from the pre-test and post-test were normally distributed. The result of the normality test for the pre-test was 0.08 for the experimental class and 0.26 for the control class. The p -values of the measurement for the two classes were more than 0.05, indicating that the data were normally distributed. For the post-test, the results were 0.48 for the experimental class and 0.13 for the control class. The p -values of measurement were more than 0.05 both for the experimental and control classes, which means that the data were also normally distributed.

Finding and discussion

Table 1 below describes the mean score of the writing aspects evaluated adapted from Brown (2007). There were five aspects: Content (C), Organization (O), Grammar (G), Vocabulary (V) and Mechanics (M).

Table 1. Mean scores of writing aspects evaluated

Participants	Mean Score of Writing Aspect Evaluated					Overall Score means	<i>t</i> -score	Sig level (2-tailed)
	C	O	G	V	M			
Experimental	10.17	6.18	5.09	4.40	4.86	77.39	4.42	.00
Control	9.13	5.26	4.61	4.17	4.43	69.39		

Table 1 above describes the five aspects of writing, which are evaluated by the first researcher as rater 1 and the English teacher as rater 2. In terms of overall scores, there is a considerable difference between the experimental group's and the control group's mean scores

for the post-test. The experimental class achieved a higher mean score ($M = 77.39$) than the students in the control class did ($M = 69.39$).

There are also differences in terms of mean scores between the experimental and control groups for each aspect of writing evaluated. Generally, the students in the experimental class achieved higher mean scores for each aspect evaluated than those in the control class. However, the most identifiable difference in mean scores between the two groups is on content and organization aspects. The experimental group's mean scores for the content and organization were 10.17 and 6.18 subsequently. Meanwhile, the control group's mean scores for the content and organization were 9.13 and 5.26 consecutively. The differences between the mean scores of the two writing aspects suggest that the experimental class's ability in developing and organizing ideas for their descriptive texts was better than the participants in the control class as a result of the different treatments provided. In other words, the employment of the TTW strategy combined with audio-visual media enables the students in the experimental class to develop and organize ideas for their writing tasks more elaborately and systematically compared to those in the control class.

For grammar and mechanics, the mean scores were relatively similar. It suggests that the treatments provided by the researchers could not give substantial impacts on the improvement of grammar and mechanics used in the participants' descriptive texts. It shows that English grammar and mechanics are still issues for them. The same case applies to the vocabulary aspect as well.

In the pre-test, the means of the overall score of the experimental class and control class were relatively similar, 62.00 and 60.65 successively. Their standard deviations were 7.81 for the experimental class and 7.89 for the control class. The statistical analysis using the t -test toward the two overall scores shows no significant difference between the two groups of students ($t = 0.58, p > .05$). In other words, the experimental and control classes have a relatively similar ability in writing descriptive text before the researchers employed different teaching strategies for the two groups.

However, it is not the case for the result of the post-test. There was a significant difference in overall score means between the two groups' descriptive writing, 77.39 for the experimental class and 69.39 for the control class. The standard deviations of the writing scores composed by the two groups of students also indicate a substantial difference, 5.61 for the experimental class and 6.62 for the control group.

The result of the independent sample t -test analysis for the post-test shows a statistically significant difference between the two groups' means of writing overall scores ($t = 4.42, p < .05$). This suggests that the use of the TTW strategy during the teaching and learning of English descriptive writing combined with audio-visual media provides a positive significant impact on the students' writing ability. In other words, the students who were taught by using the TTW strategy along with audio-visual media attained higher achievement in their descriptive writing compared to the students who were taught by using the MM strategy did. Accordingly, the alternative hypothesis (H_a), as stated in the earlier section, was accepted, and the null hypothesis (H_o) was rejected.

As described in the above section, the employment of the TTW strategy enabled the students in the experimental class to develop and organize ideas more elaborately and systematically. This result is consistent with the theory which says that the use of the TTW strategy in a class, particularly within *Think* and *Talk* stages, gives an opportunity for students to think about the topic, discuss, develop, exchange, test and edit their ideas in a group. The discussion that the students have in the group enables the students to ease their thinking and develop their ideas before starting to write. In addition, the *Think* and *Talk* stages are

important parts of every writing process. It corresponds to what Huinker and Laughlin (1996) said that thinking and talking are important steps in the process of bringing meaning into students' writing.

The result of the present research also shows that the implementation of the TTW strategy enables the students to think creatively. The students took a note about information as much as they knew during the class and exchanged their opinion in a group. This kind of activity essentially builds the students' creative thinking ability. For example, when the students found some problems, they tried to solve the problems by discussing and giving opinion alternately. The students were also more active in looking for information in the class. There were interactions among the students, so they did not learn writing silently. By discussing with their group, the students could add more information that they missed from the audio-visual media. The students exchanged ideas within their group so that the information received was more complete and ready to be developed and organized in their descriptive writing. This student-centered and collaborative learning situation experienced by the participants in the experimental class corresponds to what Rahmah (2017) said that the TTW strategy enables the students to be more active, creative, and motivated during the teaching and learning process.

The following are writing samples written by a student from the control class and a student from the experimental class after they were given the different teaching strategies as treatment. Please note that all the linguistic-based errors in the writing samples (e.g., grammar, word choices, spelling, and punctuation) are not corrected and keep as the originals.

A writing sample written by participant SAN from the control class:

Milkindo Education Park

Milkindo is one of education park in Kepanjen, Malang. Milkindo Education Park is located in Tegalsari Village. The ticket price is Rp. 15.000 and free fresh milk. When you enter the park, the worker come to explain about the cow. Besides a lot of cows, there is also a rabbit park, which must be a lots of cute rabbits. In a rabbit park, there are also many spot to take picture. There is also bicycle rental. We can also ride a horse to surround the park.

A writing sample written by participant AM from the experimental class:

Milkindo Education Park

Milkindo is the biggest milk factory in Kepanjen. It is located at Tegalsari, Kepanjen. When we arrive, we must buy entry ticket by paying Rp. 15.000 and we will get a bottle of milk. Milkindo has many facilities for education. For example the people can see the milking process. This activity usually followed by students who visit MilkindoEducation Park. The visitors can see a cattle breeding and know the cows that produce a lot of milk for the factory. The factory not only produces milk but also yogurt, pudding, cream and cream cheese. The bunny park is the most favorite facility in Milkindo with cute rabbits that can amuse visitors. The visitors can also give some carrots for the rabbits. In Milkindo Education Park, there is a playground with many facilities that can be enjoyed by the children such as trampoline, mini train, bunny park, ride a horse and so on.

Some differences between the two writing samples above emerge. SAN wrote a descriptive text shorter than AM. AM wrote more complete information about Milkindo, a famous tourist destination in Malang. AM also wrote more detailed information regarding

facilities, ticketing, and the products from the Milkindo. AM also used various words to express the same meaning, for example, *bunny* and *rabbit*. AM's descriptive text contained the word *amuse* which is a less commonly used word than the word *entertain*. This detailed information was probably obtained either from the use of audio-visual media during the teaching and learning process or from the group discussion conducted by the students. In contrast, SAN's descriptive text provided less detailed information about the Milkindo, and it had not yet covered information like its facilities for kids and products. SAN also seemed to use a more familiar vocabulary in his descriptive text compared to what AM did. The two writing samples above clearly demonstrate not only the benefits of the employment of the TTW strategy but also the advantage of the use of audio-visual media in helping the students develop ideas and improve their vocabulary usage in their descriptive writing.

The result of this study generally confirms the result of the previous study done by Lestari (2015). She implemented a TTW strategy in teaching descriptive writing for the eighth-grade students at a junior high school. Although the education level of the participants in the study was different from the present study, the result was similar. The finding demonstrates that the students who were taught by using the TTW strategy achieved higher writing scores than the students who were taught using a different teaching strategy. Lestari (2015) stated that the employment of the TTW strategy gave a positive significant impact on the students' writing descriptive text.

The result of the present study also confirms the result of the previous research conducted by Gofisnovega and Aswandi (2015). The study found that the TTW strategy gave a positive effect on the students' descriptive writing ability. Besides, the students' responses toward the implementation of the TTW strategy during their teaching and learning process of writing were positive. It indicates that the use of the TTW strategy had positive impacts on the students' learning of writing cognitively and affectively.

It should be noted, however, that during the implementation of the TTW strategy, the researchers experienced difficulty during the first day of implementing it in the classroom. In the first meeting, some of the students still had a misconception about the stages required in the TTW strategy. Some of the students wrote a descriptive text directly after the video was played without initial discussions with their group. Then, the researchers repeated the instruction regarding the procedures in implementing the TTW strategy. Fortunately, the students followed the suggested procedures in the following meeting.

In this research, the researchers did not utilize other techniques of data collection in addition to the pre-test and post-test. For this reason, the researchers did not measure the students' and teacher's perceptions about the implementation of the TTW strategy during the teaching and learning process of descriptive writing. Accordingly, extension research is required by focusing not only on the implementation of the TTW strategy alone but also on how the implementation of it is perceived by both the teacher and the students. This would make the findings more comprehensive.

Conclusion

The present study found that the employment of the TTW strategy combined with the use of audio-visual media provides a positive significant effect on the students' descriptive writing ability. After instruction using the TTW strategy was provided for three consecutive meetings, the students in the experimental group achieved better writing scores compared to those in the control group who were taught using the MM strategy. The TTW strategy and the

audio-visual media used during the teaching and learning process enabled the students to develop ideas and improve their vocabulary before writing their descriptive texts through group-work activities. The use of audio-visual media also helped the students in enhancing their learning interest in the topic.

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Appendix 1

Writing Scoring Rubric

Aspect	Score	Performance Description	Weighting
Content (C) 30% - Topics - Details	4	The topic is complete and clear and the details are related to the topic	3x
	3	The topic is complete and clear but the details are almost relating to the topic	
	2	The topic is complete and clear but the details are not related to the topic	
	1	The topic is not clear and the details are not related to the topic	
Organization (O) 20% - Identification - Description	4	Identification is complete and descriptions are arranged with proper connectives	2x
	3	Identification is complete and descriptions are arranged with almost proper connectives	
	2	Identification is not complete and descriptions are arranged with few misuse of connectives	
	1	Identification is not complete and descriptions are arranged with misuse of connectives	
Grammar (G) 20% - Use present tense - Agreement	4	Very few grammatical or agreement inaccuracies	2x
	3	Few grammatical or agreement inaccuracies but not affect the meaning	
	2	Numerous grammatical or agreement inaccuracies	
	1	Frequent grammatical or agreement inaccuracies	
Vocabulary (V) 15%	4	Effective choice words and word form	1.5x
	3	Few misuse of vocabularies, word form, but not change the meaning	
	2	Limited range confusing word and word form	
	1	Very poor knowledge of words, word forms and not understandable	
Mechanics (M) 15% - Spelling - Punctuation - Capitalization	4	It uses correct spelling, punctuation and capitalization	1.5x
	3	It has occasional errors of spelling, punctuation and capitalization	
	2	It has frequent errors of spelling, punctuation and capitalization	
	1	It dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation and capitalization	

Adapted from Brown (2007)

$$\text{SCORE} = \frac{3C+2O+2G+1.5V+1.5M}{40} \times 100$$