



The Effect of the PLEASE Strategy on Students' Ability in Writing Descriptive Text at the Tenth Grade of SMA Negeri 5 Pematangsiantar

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to find out the effect of Pick, List, Evaluate, Activate, Supply, End (PLEASE) teaching strategy to writing ability of tenth grade students of SMA Negeri 5 Pematangsiantar in writing descriptive text. This research was quantitative research. To get the answer for this research, the researcher used quasi-experimental design. This design involved two classes of the same level. The population of this research was tenth grade students of SMA Negeri 5 Pematangsiantar that tenth class. The sample of this research consisted of two classes, namely class X-6 using PLEASE teaching strategy as the experimental class and class X-2 use guided teaching strategy as the control class. To collect the data, the researcher used the test. The researcher used essay test as the instrument of the research. The result of the research showed that the effect of PLEASE teaching strategy was more significant than guided writing teaching strategy. It was proved by then t- test value $(2,972) > t\text{-table} (1,995)$. It means that H_a was accepted and H_o was rejected. The ability of students in writing a descriptive text in the experimental class was improved since they were taught by PLEASE teaching strategy. It can be conclude that Pick, List, Evaluate, Activate, Supply, End (PLEASE) teaching strategy has an effect to the writing ability of tenth grade students of SMA Negeri 5 Pematangsiantar in a descriptive text. It is recommended that the results of this research can used in order to develop the teaching strategy at school.

Keywords: PLEASE Teaching Strategy, Writing, Descriptive Text

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the four essential English skills—alongside listening, speaking, and reading—that learners need to master (Normawati et al., 2023). It plays a crucial role, as it allows individuals to convey their ideas, thoughts, or feelings in written form (Isroyani et al., 2023). Furthermore, writing serves as a communication tool, enabling the expression of ideas, persuasion of readers, or dissemination of information (Fitria, 2024). Brown (2001), as cited in Sumarno (2019), describes writing as a cognitive process where a writer generates a final written product based on their thoughts, emphasizing that writing involves not only engaging with existing ideas but also developing them further.

Mastering writing skills is vital for students, as it enhances their critical and creative thinking abilities and allows them to express their ideas through writing. Raimes (1983), cited in Jayanti (2019), identifies several functions of writing: to communicate with an audience, express ideas without the immediacy of face-to-face dialogue, explore topics, document experiences, and become acquainted with the conventions of written English discourse. Tarigan (1985), noted in Titus (2023), defines writing as the act of recording graphic symbols that represent a language, enabling others to read them if they understand the language and symbols involved. Rass (2015), as referenced in Husna (2017), points out that writing is a challenging skill for both native and non-native speakers. Writers must navigate various factors, including content, organization, intent, audience, vocabulary, and mechanics—such as punctuation, spelling, and capitalization. Additionally, students need to utilize appropriate vocabulary, create coherent text, and organize their writing effectively to ensure readers can grasp the intended message.

According to Lamusu (2022), high school students are encouraged to study different text genres, including descriptive text. This type of writing provides detailed information about a person, place, object, or animal, offering clear descriptions of their characteristics. Gerot and Wignell (1994), as cited in Ismayanti & Kholiq (2021), describe descriptive text as a format used to convey sensory details about how something appears, smells, feels, acts, tastes, or sounds. To write effective descriptive texts, students must gather extensive information. Sipayung et al. (2021) explain that a descriptive text typically includes an introductory section that identifies the subject, followed by a descriptive portion that outlines its characteristics and qualities, focusing on factual details rather than opinions. However, students often encounter challenges when writing descriptive texts, such as limited vocabulary, grammatical issues, and lack of motivation. As noted by Purnamasari et al. (2021), students are in the process of developing and organizing their ideas when writing descriptive texts. Furthermore, grammar and mechanics often present difficulties, and many students struggle with this type of writing due to teachers relying solely on conventional instructional methods, resulting in decreased motivation and engagement.

During the researcher's internship at SMA Negeri 5 Pematangsiantar in the tenth grade, it was observed that students faced significant challenges in writing, particularly in crafting descriptive texts. Firstly, students struggled with organizing their ideas into coherent text; they often felt unsure about how to begin their writing and what to include at the start. Effective descriptive writing requires logical organization of thoughts to communicate details clearly to the reader. Secondly, a lack of vocabulary hindered students' ability to find appropriate words, especially since descriptive texts typically require the use of the simple present tense, which they sometimes confused with the past tense. Thirdly, students exhibited limited grammatical skills, which stemmed from insufficient knowledge of the components necessary for writing descriptive texts. Additionally, many students were unable to adhere to the generic structure of descriptive writing. The absence of the PLEASE teaching strategy in the classroom contributed to their low performance, as evidenced by their writing scores, which did not meet the Minimum Competence Criteria (MCC) for English, set at a score of 70. Among the students, only 14 (38.89%) achieved this score, while 22 (61.11%) did not.

Given these challenges, the researcher recognized the need for effective strategies to assist students in writing descriptive texts. The conventional teaching approach employed by the teacher primarily involved explaining the generic structure and language components of descriptive texts. Following this, students were expected to write the texts independently or in groups. This method led the researcher to conclude that the focus was predominantly on the final product rather than the writing process itself. According to Brown (2007), as cited in Andika et al. (2023), effective writing instruction should emphasize generating ideas,

organizing them coherently, using discourse markers and rhetorical conventions for cohesion, revising, editing for grammatical accuracy, and ultimately producing a polished final product.

The PLEASE (Pick, List, Evaluate, Activate, Supply, End) teaching strategy is a mnemonic approach designed to aid students in writing by guiding them through a series of steps to compose a paragraph. This strategy simplifies the writing process, making it easier for students to remember the acronym and follow the guidelines. Additionally, the PLEASE strategy encourages students to connect with their prior knowledge and the information they have gathered while preparing their academic writing. Developed by Marshal Welch in 1992, the PLEASE strategy aims to streamline the writing process by condensing actions into manageable steps, thereby facilitating prewriting, planning, and ongoing evaluation through the use of six mnemonic cues that guide students in completing writing tasks independently.

The researcher is keen on implementing the PLEASE teaching strategy because it serves as an effective tool for helping students articulate their ideas in writing coherently, from the introductory sentences through to the conclusion. The acronym PLEASE stands for several steps: P represents "Pick," which involves selecting a topic; L signifies "List," where students list ideas related to that topic; E stands for "Evaluate," meaning students assess their list of ideas. A and S, which stand for "Activate" and "Supply," involve crafting a paragraph by starting with a topic sentence and adding supporting sentences. Finally, E, which represents "End," indicates that students should edit and revise their work during this phase.

Based on explanation above, the researcher formulates the title of research namely **"The Effect of the PLEASE Strategy on Students' Ability in Writing Descriptive Text at the Tenth Grade of SMA Negeri 5 Pematangsiantar"**.

METHOD

The research design serves as a thorough, detailed, and specific framework for gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data. Creswell et al. (2018) note that the research design encompasses all other elements of the study, such as variables, hypotheses, experiments, techniques, and statistical analysis. In this investigation, the researcher utilized quantitative research methods. Sugiyono (2018) describes quantitative research as a method grounded in positivist principles, which involves using concrete numerical data that can be measured with statistical tools to address the research problem and derive conclusions.

This study is categorized as experimental, specifically employing a quasi-experimental design. This type of design allows for the examination of cause-and-effect relationships between variables in real-world contexts. The researcher selected two classes to administer pre-tests and post-tests to assess the impact of the treatment. The experimental group received different teaching methods compared to the control group. The experimental group was taught using the PLEASE strategy, while the control group utilized a guided writing strategy. The experimental class was X-6, which received the special treatment of the PLEASE teaching strategy, whereas class X-2 served as the control group, receiving the standard guided writing strategy to enhance their ability to write descriptive texts. The researcher employed an essay test, asking students to "write a descriptive text that includes both identification and descriptive content."

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Data Description

The data for this research consisted of descriptive texts written by students, focusing on describing a person according to the generic structure of descriptive writing. Each paragraph included both identification and description elements. To assess the impact of the PLEASE teaching strategy, the researcher administered pre-tests and post-tests in the

experimental class.

Table 1. Students scores of the Experimental Class

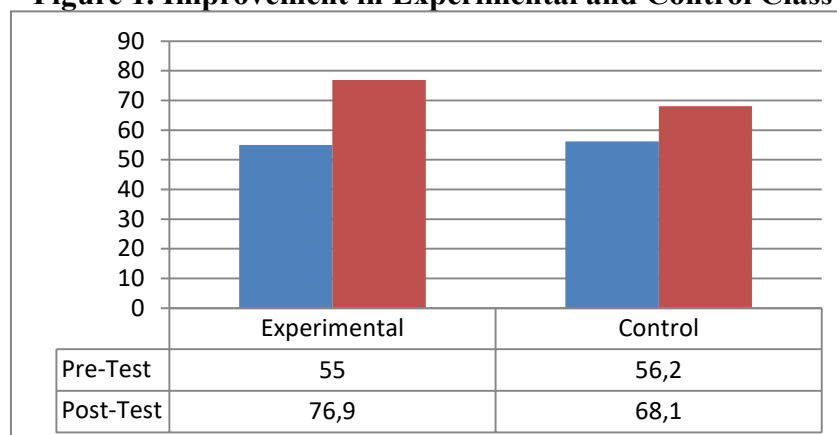
No	Student's Initial Name	Pre Test	Post Test
1.	AGS	35	78
2.	AG	70	90
3.	ARN	40	77
4.	AR	50	70
5.	ARH	60	75
6.	BS	50	70
7.	BAZ	40	75
8.	CS	40	70
9.	DAS	65	85
10.	DTT	60	70
11.	DAN	40	80
12.	DFL	35	70
13.	FAP	60	80
14.	GBS	75	75
15.	HT	40	62
16.	IAP	68	70
17.	JBS	55	83
18.	KRD	50	70
19.	MT	50	60
20.	MSS	45	75
21.	MZ	35	80
22.	MHY	75	85
23.	MIL	60	70
24.	PS	50	80
25.	RZ	50	85
26.	RD	60	80
27.	SIN	60	70
28.	SEM	45	70
29.	SA	70	100
30.	TUS	65	83
31.	VHC	70	96
32.	VES	70	70
33.	YA	63	75
34.	YU	50	74
35.	WY	75	90
Σ		1926	2693

In the experimental class, the highest pre-test score recorded was 75, while the lowest score was 35. After implementing the PLEASE strategy as a teaching method, the post-test results showed a significant improvement, with the highest score reaching 100 and the lowest score at 62. The total score for the pre-test in the experimental group was 1926 points, resulting in an average pre-test score of 55. Following the instructional intervention, the experimental group achieved a total of 2693 points in the post-test, leading to an improved average score of 76.9.

This data illustrates a clear positive trend in student performance, emphasizing the effectiveness of the PLEASE strategy in enhancing descriptive text writing skills. The increase in both the highest and average scores from the pre-test to the post-test indicates that

the teaching strategies employed had a significant impact on the students' ability to write descriptive texts. These findings highlight the importance of innovative teaching methods in promoting student engagement and improving educational outcomes in writing skills.

Figure 1. Improvement in Experimental and Control Class



After calculating the mean scores for both the pre-tests and post-tests of the experimental and control groups, the researcher illustrated the combined data through a graph. The chart clearly indicates an improvement in student performance, particularly following the intervention. The experimental group, which utilized the PLEASE strategy as a teaching method, demonstrated a significant increase in scores. Specifically, the mean score for the experimental class improved from 55 in the pre-test to 76.9 in the post-test. In contrast, the control group, which continued with traditional teaching methods, showed a more modest improvement, with their mean score increasing from 56.2 in the pre-test to 68.1 in the post-test.

This results in an increase of 21.9 points for the experimental class, while the control class experienced an improvement of only 11.9 points. The findings of this study suggest that the use of the PLEASE strategy had a significant impact on enhancing students' descriptive text writing abilities. The greater improvement observed in the experimental class compared to the control class indicates that employing engaging teaching methods can be an effective strategy for developing writing skills among students. This underscores the importance of innovative teaching methods in promoting student engagement and improving educational outcomes in writing skills.

Testing Hypothesis

After conducting the data analysis, the researcher found that the t-test value was 2.972. The distribution table and t-test value were then calculated for various degrees of freedom (df). In this study, the degrees of freedom were determined to be 68, and at a significance level of 0.05, the t-table value was also 1.995. Based on these calculations, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted, while the null hypothesis (H_o) was rejected, as the t-test value surpassed the t-table value at the 0.05 significance level, specifically $2.972 > 1.995$.

Research Findings

Based on the data analysis presented above, the researcher utilized two classes as samples: the experimental class and the control class. In the experimental class, the researcher implemented the PLEASE teaching strategy as the treatment. Conversely, the control class did not receive this treatment, as it continued with the conventional guided writing strategy. The researcher found the following:

1. In the experimental class, the lowest pre-test score was 35, while the highest was 75. The lowest post-test score was 62, and the highest was 100. In the control class, the lowest

pre-test score was 25, and the highest was 40. The control class's post-test scores ranged from a low of 82 to a high of 96.

2. The variance of the post-test scores in the experimental class was 2619, whereas the variance in the control class was 7935.9.
3. The mean pre-test score for the experimental class was 55, and the mean post-test score was 76.9. For the control class, the mean pre-test score was 56.2, and the mean post-test score was 68.1.
4. The standard deviation for the experimental class was 8.7, while the standard deviation for the control class was 15.27.
5. The standard error of the mean difference was calculated to be 2.96.
6. The degrees of freedom were determined to be 68.
7. The t-table value was 1.995, and the t-test result was 2.972.

Discussion

The research aimed to determine whether the PLEASE teaching strategy had a significant effect on the writing abilities of tenth-grade students at SMA Negeri 5 Pematangsiantar, specifically in writing descriptive texts. The researcher selected samples from both an experimental class and a control class. In the control class, students were taught using the guided writing strategy. Despite this approach, students struggled to know how to begin their writing, requiring the researcher to provide individual guidance on how to write a descriptive text. As a result, students missed opportunities to engage in the activity and lost interest, which was reflected in their low mean scores from both the pre-test and post-test.

In contrast, the experimental class received the PLEASE teaching strategy as the treatment. This strategy was implemented to enhance students' writing abilities in creating descriptive texts. With the PLEASE strategy, students became more active and creative in their writing. The researcher provided feedback on their worksheets based on the generic structure of their texts, focusing on how they organized their sentences to form a descriptive text. The students successfully developed the generic structure of their writing, as evidenced by the higher mean scores in the pre-test and post-test compared to the control class.

After analyzing the data, the researcher found that the mean score of the post-test for the experimental class was higher than that of the control group. The mean post-test score for the experimental class was 76.9, compared to 68.1 for the control class. In the experimental class, the highest post-test score was 100, achieved by three students, while the lowest was 62, obtained by one student. In the control class, the highest post-test score was 96, achieved by four students, and the lowest was 82, reached by two students. This indicates that students in the experimental class demonstrated superior writing abilities in descriptive texts compared to those in the control class.

Several factors contributed to the higher results in the experimental class compared to the control class. Firstly, the PLEASE teaching strategy served as a roadmap to assist students in the writing process and in organizing their work. It consists of six stages that help students write without becoming bored during the learning process. Students showed interest and enthusiasm when the researcher explained the steps involved in this strategy, which encouraged them to generate their ideas. In the initial step, students were prompted to share ideas about a topic provided by the researcher. This strategy facilitated the writing process, as students were guided step-by-step until they completed their texts. Brownell (2012), as cited in Rahmalia & Desfiyenti (2022), explains that this strategy teaches students mnemonics to remember and apply the PLEASE steps (Pick, List, Evaluate, Activate, Supply, End), meaning that teachers guide students through a structured approach to improve their writing skills.

The findings of this research align with previous studies. Siregar (2020) found a

significant effect of the PLEASE strategy on writing descriptive texts among eighth-grade students at MTs Al-Mukhlisin Sibuhuan Padang Lawas. Additionally, Irsa Nabila Tri Wahyuningtyas and Mukminatus Zuhriyah (2024) reported significant differences in writing achievement between students taught using the PLEASE strategy and those taught with conventional methods, concluding that the PLEASE strategy was more effective. Furthermore, Rahmalia (2022) identified a significant effect of the PLEASE strategy in teaching writing at MTsN 3 Lima Puluh Kota during the 2017/2018 academic year.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis, findings, and discussions from this research, the researcher concluded that the PLEASE teaching strategy positively impacted the writing abilities of tenth-grade students at SMA Negeri 5 Pematangsiantar in composing descriptive texts. During the learning activities, students were more engaged and creative when using the PLEASE teaching strategy. The effect of the PLEASE teaching strategy was found to be more significant than that of the guided writing strategy on the students' writing abilities. This was evidenced by a t-test value of 2.972, compared to a t-table value of 1.995. The researcher noted that the t-test value exceeded the t-table value ($2.972 > 1.995$), indicating that the impact of the PLEASE teaching strategy on the writing abilities of tenth-grade students at SMA Negeri 5 Pematangsiantar was more pronounced than that of the guided writing strategy. Consequently, the researcher accepted the alternative hypothesis (H_a) and rejected the null hypothesis (H_o), concluding that students' writing achievements improved after the implementation of the PLEASE teaching strategy.

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