

## **USING COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY TO IMPROVE WRITING SKILLS OF GRADE TEN STUDENTS OF SMA NEGERI 7 PALU**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The objective of this research is to find out if using Cooperative Learning Strategy can improve students' writing skills of grade ten students at SMA Negeri 7 Palu. The researchers applied quasi-experimental design with two classes: experimental and control classes. The experimental class consisted of 34 students and control class consisted of 35 students selected through cluster random sampling technique. In collecting data, the researchers administered pretest and posttest to both the experimental class and control class. The data were analyzed statistically in order to find out the significant difference of students' achievement before and after treatments. Using 0.025 level of significance and 67 degree of freedom (df), the researchers found that the value of t-table was 1.998, which was lower than the t-counted 3.57. It means that the hypothesis is accepted. In other words, using Cooperative Learning Strategy can improve students' writing skills.

***Keywords: Cooperative Learning Strategy; Writing Skills; Improve***

## INTRODUCTION

Writing skill is one of the language skills that English as a second or foreign language learners need to master. This is the activity of conveying ideas or messages in written form. It involves various linguistic elements such as spelling, grammar, vocabulary, context, and punctuation (Astiantih & Akfan, 2023). This demonstrates that writing is a difficult skill to master. Therefore, good writing skills are needed so that students can write well and systematically.

Writing skill is essential for students as they serve as a fundamental tool for effective communication and learning that across all academic disciplines and beyond. It is a crucial skill to support students' activities in exploring and developing an idea, knowledge, and experience (Megawati, 2020). Having good skill in writing enables students to express their ideas, thoughts, and understanding of subject matter clearly and coherently. It fosters critical thinking and structured organization of information, which are essential for academic success. Furthermore, writing allows students to engage in self-expression, creativity, and enables them to communicate their perspectives and insights with others.

It is mentioned in the *Kurikulum Merdeka* that there are several kinds of text taught at the senior high school and one of them is descriptive text. In learning descriptive text, students have to describe people, things, and places. They are supposed to know information about the thing being described including its name, nature, and function. They have to pay closer attention to detail while describing objects using proper grammar (Yoandita, 2019). Thus, students can organize ideas in good sentences and paragraphs.

However, result of preliminary research performed in July 2023 showed that the students got difficulty in writing descriptive text. Some factors contributed to the difficulty. First, they were lacking of vocabulary and this made them get difficulty to put ideas into writing. They were also poor in grammar and writing mechanisms. Therefore, appropriate teaching strategies need to be implemented to help the students cope with the problems.

The researchers applied Cooperative Learning Strategy in this matter. The strategy involves students actively and makes learning not boring. Cooperative Learning Strategy is a strategy that is applied by creating small groups of 5-6 people with different levels of understanding. This strategy can make students more active in learning and exchanging ideas with their friends. The students with lower understanding will be helped in understanding the material by those with higher understanding in each group.

The following is the original procedure of Cooperative Learning as mentioned by Johnson, Johnson, Holubec, and Roy (1984):

1. Clearly outlining the lesson goals.
2. Making decisions regarding grouping students into learning groups prior to the lesson.
3. Clearly describing to students the assignment, goal structure, and learning activity.
4. Observing and intervening to provide task support (such as answering questions and teaching task skills) or to improve students' interpersonal and group abilities.

5. Evaluating students' accomplishments and assisting students in discussing how well they interacted with one another.

Based on the description above, the researchers formulates the hypothesis of this research: "The improvement of grade ten students who being taught using Cooperative Learning Strategy differs significantly from those who receive regular instruction only."

The researchers chose non-directional hypothesis for two reasons. They were students' lack of motivation to learn English and students' poor English skills. The English teacher there said that students were not enthusiastic about learning English. This can be seen when learning activities take place, they were not focused. In addition, their English skills were also poor, making it difficult for them to understand the material presented by the teacher during the learning process.

## METHOD

This research applied quasi-experimental research design. Quasi-experimental design aims to find out the relationship between variables involving an experimental group and a control group. Both groups used pretest and posttest to measure participants' abilities. However, treatment was only given to the experimental class, while the control class did not receive treatment but used the strategy applied by the teacher. The research employed a design as suggested by Arikunto (2013) as follows:

Table 1- Research Design

Group	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
Experimental Group	O <sub>1</sub>	X	O <sub>2</sub>
Control Group	O <sub>3</sub>	-	O <sub>4</sub>

Where: O = Pretest of Experimental Group

O = Pretest of Control Group

O = Posttest of Experimental Group

O = Posttest of Control Group

X = Treatment

- = No Treatment

This research involved grade ten students of SMA Negeri 7 Palu which consisted of 10 classes. Each class consisted of 34 to 36 students. The total number of the students is 355. In detail, the number of the students in each class can be seen in the following table:

Table 2 – Number of students in each class

No	Class Name	Students Number
1	X 1	36
2	X 2	36
3	X 3	36
4	X 4	34
5	X 5	36
6	X 6	36

7	X 7	35
8	X 8	35
9	X 9	36
10	X 10	35
<b>Total</b>		<b>355</b>

To select the sample of this research, the researchers applied cluster random sampling technique due to the relatively short research time and the large number of grade ten students of SMA Negeri 7 Palu. The researchers chose class X 4 which consisted of 34 students as an experimental group while X7 which consisted of 35 students as a control group.

This research consisted of two variables. They were dependent variable and independent variable. Dependent variable was the writing skills of grade ten students of SMA Negeri 7 Palu, while the independent variable was Cooperative Learning Strategy. In this case, the independent variable was a strategy that researchers used to improve students' writing skills.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### RESULTS

Data were collected for a month. On January 10th, 2024, the pretest was administered to both the experimental and control classes. The experimental class received the teaching treatment twice a week from January 17th to February 22nd, 2024. The posttest was given to both classes on February 28th, 2024. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 show students individual score on the pretest of both classes.

Table 3 – Students' Individual Score of the Experimental Class on Pretest

No	Initials	Pretest	Post test	Deviation	Square Deviation
1	ABA	25.00	33.33	8.33	69.39
2	ADA	25.00	33.33	8.33	69.39
3	ACS	25.00	50.00	25.00	625.00
4	AD	25.00	41.67	16.67	277.89
5	AFR	25.00	75.00	50.00	2500.00
6	AH	33.33	50.00	16.67	277.89
7	AK	33.33	41.67	8.34	69.56
8	AM	33.33	58.33	25.00	625.00
9	AN	33.33	50.00	16.67	277.89
10	ANS	33.33	41.67	8.34	69.56
11	CAK	33.33	66.67	33.34	1111.56
12	DE	25.00	33.33	8.33	69.39
13	DM	25.00	58.33	33.33	1110.89
14	FA	33.33	50.00	16.67	277.89
15	FAS	25.00	50.00	25.00	625.00

16	FS	33.33	66.67	33.34	1111.56
17	FSL	33.33	75.00	41.67	1736.39
18	KZA	33.33	58.33	25.00	625.00
19	MA	41.67	58.33	16.66	277.56
20	MAR	25.00	50.00	25.00	625.00
21	ME	25.00	41.67	16.67	277.89
22	MEL	25.00	58.33	33.33	1110.89
23	MR	33.33	58.33	25.00	625.00
24	MRH	33.33	50.00	16.67	277.89
25	MUA	25.00	25.00	0.00	0.00
26	NH	41.67	58.33	16.66	277.56
27	NV	50.00	58.33	8.33	69.39
28	RA	33.33	50.00	16.67	277.89
29	RM	33.33	41.67	8.34	69.56
30	RO	25.00	41.67	16.67	277.89
31	SRS	41.67	58.33	16.66	277.56
32	SU	41.67	41.67	0.00	0.00
33	TL	33.33	75.00	41.67	1736.39
34	WA	33.33	50.00	16.67	277.89
<b>Total Score</b>		<b>1074.96</b>	<b>1749.99</b>	<b>675.03</b>	<b>17987.61</b>

The table above shows the students' standard score of the experimental class on the pretest. Clearly, the highest score was 50, and the lowest score was 25. No one student got score above the passing grade of 60. In other words, all students had poor score on the pretest.

Table 4 – Students' Score of the Experimental Class on Pretest

No	Initials	Pretest	Post Test	Deviation	Square Deviation
1	AA	33.33	41.67	8.34	69.56
2	AO	33.33	41.67	8.34	69.56
3	AR	25.00	50.00	25.00	625.00
4	ARM	50.00	41.67	-8.33	69.39
5	AZ	33.33	66.67	33.34	1111.56
6	DA	41.67	50.00	8.33	69.39
7	DAF	33.33	41.67	8.34	69.56
8	DAI	33.33	50.00	16.67	277.89
9	DAH	58.33	58.33	0.00	0.00
10	FA	58.33	50.00	-8.33	69.39
11	FE	25.00	50.00	25.00	625.00
12	FF	25.00	41.67	16.67	277.89
13	FI	25.00	33.33	8.33	69.39

14	KS	25.00	25.00	0.00	0.00
15	MB	25.00	50.00	25.00	625.00
16	MUR	33.33	33.33	0.00	0.00
17	MR	41.67	41.67	0.00	0.00
18	MRF	25.00	33.33	8.33	69.39
19	MRI	25.00	41.67	16.67	277.89
20	MS	50.00	41.67	-8.33	69.39
21	NA	41.67	50.00	8.33	69.39
22	NI	50.00	41.67	-8.33	69.39
23	NIN	25.00	33.33	8.33	69.39
24	PA	25.00	33.33	8.33	69.39
25	RA	25.00	50.00	25.00	625.00
26	RAZ	41.67	41.67	0.00	0.00
27	RI	33.33	50.00	16.67	277.89
28	SAI	25.00	25.00	0.00	0.00
29	SH	50.00	58.33	8.33	69.39
30	TBS	41.67	75.00	33.33	1110.89
31	TE	25.00	41.67	16.67	277.89
32	TH	41.67	41.67	0.00	0.00
33	VA	33.33	50.00	16.67	277.89
34	VE	50.00	58.33	8.33	69.39
35	ZZ	33.33	50.00	16.67	277.89
<b>Total Score</b>		<b>1241.65</b>	<b>1583.35</b>	<b>341.70</b>	<b>7709.04</b>

Similarly, the control class's standard score was poor. There were no students passing a minimum passing grade of  $\geq 60$ . The highest score was 58, and the lowest score was 25. The students' scores in three aspects of writing were low.

The researchers used Arikunto's formula (2013) to compute the sum of square deviation for both groups:

1. Experimental Class

$$\begin{aligned}
 \sum x^2 &= \sum X^2 - \frac{(\sum X)^2}{N} \\
 &= 17987.61 - \frac{(675.03)^2}{34} \\
 &= 17987.61 - \frac{455665.5}{34} \\
 &= 17987.61 - 13401.93 \\
 &= 4585.68
 \end{aligned}$$

The sum of square deviation of the experimental class is 4585.68.

2. Control Class

$$\sum y^2 = \sum Y^2 - \frac{(\sum Y)^2}{N}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 &= 7709.04 - \frac{(341.70)^2}{35} \\
 &= 7709.04 - \frac{116758.89}{35} \\
 &= 7709.04 - 3335.97 \\
 &= 4373.07
 \end{aligned}$$

The sum of square deviation of the control class is 4373.07.

### 3. T-Counted

$$\begin{aligned}
 t &= \frac{Mx - My}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{\sum x^2 + \sum y^2}{Nx + Ny - 2}\right)\left(\frac{1}{Nx}\right) + \left(\frac{1}{Ny}\right)}} \\
 &= \frac{19.85 - 9.76}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{4585.68 + 4373.07}{34 + 35 - 2}\right)\left(\frac{1}{34}\right) + \left(\frac{1}{35}\right)}} \\
 &= \frac{10.09}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{8958.75}{67}\right)(0.03) + (0.03)}} \\
 &= \frac{10.09}{\sqrt{(133.71)(0.06)}} \\
 &= \frac{10.09}{\sqrt{8.02}} \\
 &= \frac{10.09}{2.83} \\
 &= 3.57
 \end{aligned}$$

The foregoing calculation revealed that the t-counted value was 3.57. However, this cannot determine if the hypothesis is accepted. As a result, the t-table value must be calculated using the interpolation formula proposed by Jainuri (2022), as follows.

$$C = C_0 + \frac{C_1 - C_0}{B_1 - B_0} \cdot (B - B_0)$$

Where:

C = critical value

C0 = critical value of minimum degree of freedom

C1 = critical value of maximum degree of freedom

B1 = maximum degree of freedom

B0 = minimum degree of freedom

B = the degree of freedom

Degree of freedom:  $Nx + Ny - 2$

$$= 34 + 35 - 2$$

$$= 67 \text{ (between 60 and 120)}$$

Level of significance:

$$= 0.025$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 &= df (60) = 2.000 \quad df (120) = 1.980 \\
 C &= C_0 + \frac{C_1 - C_0}{B_1 - B_0} \cdot (B - B_0) \\
 &= 2.000 + \frac{1.980 - 2.000}{120 - 60} \cdot (67 - 60) \\
 &= 2.000 + \frac{-0.02}{60} \cdot (7) \\
 &= 2.000 + (-0.0023) \\
 &= 1.998
 \end{aligned}$$

The above calculation revealed that the t-table value was 1.998. The t-counted value of 3.57 is greater than the t-table value of 1.998, indicating acceptance of the research hypothesis. Thus, the classroom treatment using Cooperative Learning Strategy improves students' writing skills. Using Cooperative Learning Strategy can improve writing skills of the sampled grade ten students at SMA Negeri 7 Palu.

## DISCUSSION

This research aimed to determine if using Cooperative Learning Strategy can improve students writing skills of grade ten students of SMA Negeri 7 Palu. The result showed that there was a significant difference in the students' scores before and after the treatment using Cooperative Learning Strategy. It means, Cooperative Learning Strategy can solve the students' problems, as mentioned in the background, that they got difficulty in writing descriptive text, especially on three aspects of writing. They are vocabulary, grammar and mechanics of writing.

The implementation of a Cooperative Learning Strategy is successful since it has many advantages. It can foster a sense of community and cooperation among students, as well as give them the opportunity to master new skills (Phan, 2023). It emphasizes collaboration among students to achieve shared learning goals. In group assignments, each group member must collaborate and assist each other in understanding the topic matter (Yuliani, Normilawati, Andani and Aulia, 2021). In addition, students can help each other if in one group there are students who have difficulty understanding the material.

The findings supported the previous studies by (Shammout, 2020; Yusuf, Jusoh, Yusuf, 2019) who reported that using Cooperative Learning Strategy can improve writing skills of senior high school students. Cooperative Learning Strategy can improve students' writing skills because it enables individuals with different characteristics to learn together in groups, working towards a common objective and supporting each other (Pullu, 2023). It emphasizes the development of students' critical thinking and logical reasoning skills throughout their English writing, promoting active classroom engagement and instilling a sense of pleasure in learning (Ren, 2023). Furthermore, it can help students stay motivated and interested in their learning. Thus, Cooperative Learning Strategy can be an effective strategy for teaching students in writing.

However, in cooperative learning strategies, some students may rely on more capable group members, thereby limiting opportunities for other students to learn and contribute. This can lead to a



lack of engagement and participation among less capable group members, potentially hindering their overall learning experience. Besides, this lack of engagement and participation can also negatively impact the writing skills of less capable group members, as they may not receive sufficient opportunities to practice and develop their writing skills. Therefore, teachers should monitor the group work process and encourage students to be active in group work. Additionally, encouraging students to share responsibilities can enable students to contribute effectively and enhance team quality.

Based on previous student pre-test and post-test calculations, the calculated t-counted value was greater than the t-table ( $3.57 > 1.998$ ) for a significance level (0.025) and degrees of freedom ( $df = 67$ ). From these results, the researchers found there was a significant difference between the pre-test and posttest results. This means that the hypothesis was accepted. This was proven by the improvement in students' writing skills after being given treatment using Cooperative Learning Strategy.

## CONCLUSION

Using the Cooperative Learning Strategy has a positive effect on students' writing skills of the sampled grade ten students at SMA Negeri 7 Palu. Based on the limitation of this study, the researchers gives several suggestions. Firstly, ensure that grouping is done considering the skill levels and learning needs of each group member. This way, more capable group members can assist those who are less capable without usurping the role of the teacher. Then, assign different roles in each group task so that every member has the opportunity to contribute and learn from diverse roles.

In the other hand, English teachers who wish to effectively teach descriptive writing can utilize this strategy since it helps students develop their skills to write descriptive text. Then, for future researchers who are interested in undertaking the same study must expand their expertise in order to gain a greater benefit from the research results. The researchers hopes that the research findings can serve as a starting point for future researchers who face similar challenges, and that this research can be used as a reference.

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