ENHANCING STUDENTS' WRITING COMPETENCE BY USING *THINK, WRITE, PAIR AND SHARE* STRATEGY

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Abstract

This study attempts to find out whether Think, Write, Pair, and Share strategy is effective for the teaching of writing. Two classes were taken as samples, one class as an experimental group and the other one as a control group, each of which consisted of 32 students. It was hypothesized that learners in the experimental group would get better results than those in the control group. The data were analyzed using a t-test. The results indicated that the experimental group got a higher mean score than the control group. The result of the t-test is 5.84 while the t-table is 3.6. Based on the scores it was concluded that Think, Write, Pair, and Share strategy is effective for the teaching of writing.

Key words: Think, write, pair, share, write.

การเสริมความสามารถในการเขียนของนักเรียน โดยการใช้ความคิด การ เขียน และกลยุทธ์การทำงานเป็น

คู่

บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษานี้เพื่อศึกษาว่า ความคิด การ เขียน และกลยุทธ์การทำงานเป็นคู่มีประสิทธิภาพสำหรับการสอน

การเขียนอย่างไร โดยศึกษานักเรียนสองห้อง โดยใช้ห้องหนึ่งเป็นกลุ่มท   ดลองและอีกห้องหนึ่งเป็นกลุ่ม

ควบคุม ซึ่งแต่ละห้องมีนักเรียนจำนวน 32 คน โดยตั้งสมมติฐานว่าผู้เรียนในกลุ่มทดลองจะได้ผลที่ดีกว่าผู้ที่

อยู่ในกลุ่มควบคุม ได้นำข้อมูลมาวิเคราะห์โดยใช้ t-test ผลการทดลองพบว่ากลุ่มทดลองมีคะแนนเฉลี่ย

สูงกว่ากลุ่มควบคุม ผลจาก t-test คือ 5.84 ในขณะที่จากตารางคือ 3.6 จึงสรุปได้ว่าการคิด เขียน การ

ทำงานเป็น   คู่และกลยุทธ์แบ่งปันมีประสิทธิภาพสำหรับการสอนการเขียน

คำสำคัญ: การคิด การเขียน การทำงานเป็น คู่และกลยุทธ์การแบ่งปัน

Writing has become of a primary concern among English lecturers at IKIP PGRI Semarang particularly in the English Department for it plays an important role in the success of the students' studies. The English Department students are required to conduct research and write a report in English before graduating from the program. Therefore, writing skill is considered to be an absolutely important skill that should be acquired by the students in order to be able to write a report in acceptable English.

Teachers are constantly confronted with the reality of the unsatisfactory students' performance in writing. Although EFL learners have been taught the linguistic elements, grammar, vocabulary in relation to writing for a long time, they are still unable to write an acceptable text. According to Nation (2001:179) and Johnson et.al (1989: 153), writing needs not only the mastery of linguistic elements: the grammar and lexicon in relation to sentences and the various markers of cohesion in relation to discourse, but also the schemata of the writer's mind.

The basic idea of schemata is our experience and knowledge of life through socialization, afterwards, people form mental representation (that is, 'schemata') of important elements in the world. (Littlewood 1989: 280; Celce-Murcia, 2001: 89 and 156) suggests that schemata provides us a way of structuring our knowledge – a kind of internal map of our world-by means of which we can: (a) organize our past experience into meaningful categories; (b) understand new experiences that seem to fit our existing schemata; (c) predict what is likely to take place in familiar situations, and; (d) therefore, take actions that lead to desired results.

Recent findings suggest that practicing language elements in relation to writing a text is not enough but that with appropriate instruction, learners

can improve their writing skill (Connor, 1996). Herrell and Jordan, (2007), propose a technique of teaching writing that involves several steps; they are prewriting, drafting, conferencing, revising, editing, and publishing. This approach is useful for second language learners because they learn the steps, are given time to practice each step with feedback and guidance from the teacher, and revise their own writing in sequential lessons based on their own levels of understanding. In line with this idea, Boardman and Frydenberg (2002) stated that good writers think, plan, write a draft, think, rewrite, think, and rewrite until they are satisfied. It is a continuous process of thinking and organizing, rethinking and reorganizing. Therefore, good writers should go through six basic steps: assessing the assignment, generating ideas, organizing ideas, writing the first draft, rewriting, and the last step is writing the final draft.

Broadly and Kee Wing (1988: 290) also agree that attention must be paid to the process of writing such as planning, revising and analyzing, as well as the final product. It begins with writing a paragraph which usually consists of several sentences but it can also sometimes be just one or two sentences (Boardman & Frydenberg, 2002). A paragraph generally contains a topic sentence, a body or supporting sentences, and a conclusion or concluding sentence. The topic sentence is significant because it is the most important sentence in a paragraph as it contains the main idea of the paragraph and it informs the reader what the paragraph will be about. Thus, writing is a process that needs time to think, draft, revise, edit, refine, and to finalize. Think, Write, Pair, and Share strategy seems to be appropriate in teaching writing for it can motivate and encourage students' classroom participation and assist students to formulate individual ideas and share these ideas with a peer. In this technique, a problem is posed, students have time to think, work in pairs to solve the problem and share their ideas with the class.

In practice, first of all the teacher explains to the students that they would think about a topic and then write a draft in one paragraph; afterwards, pair with a partner and discuss the topic before they share ideas with the class. To begin with, the teacher reads a familiar text and asks the students to summarize the text. So in this case the students begin to think and create a title then decide the topic sentence, supporting sentence that supports the topic sentence (considered as body) then end with a concluding sentence (considered as conclusion). After creating the topic sentence they write their ideas into a coherent paragraph. Then in pairs, they reread their

partner's writing and lastly share what they comprehended in the writing and state whether it was correct or not.

This is a strong reinforcement activity for learners, to give them an opportunity to read and reread the text, while receiving encouragement and support from a partner. Pairing gives both students an opportunity to explore the language at a relaxed pace in a relatively stress-free environment. The social element introduced in this activity offers a positive opportunity for verbal and social interaction, reinforcing language acquisition and development (Herrel and Jordan, 2006). This study therefore addresses the following research question:

1. Is there any significant difference between students who are taught writing by using *Think, Write, Pair, and Share* strategy and those taught with conventional strategies?

Method

This is an experimental research aiming at finding out whether or not a Think, Write, Pair and Share strategy is effective for the teaching of writing. The study includes two classes consisting of 32 students each from a total number of 12 classes of the third semester English course of the English Department of IKIP PGRI Semarang. One class was considered as the experimental group and the other one as the control group. The experimental group was taught writing using Think, Write, Pair and Share strategies while the control group was taught writing with conventional strategies.

The instrument used for collecting the data was a writing test based on content, organization, grammar, vocabulary and mechanics (Brown: 2004: 246). Both the experimental and control groups were given a pre-test and a post-test. The Pre-test was given before the treatment to ascertain the writing competence of both the groups. The post-test was given to find out the differences in writing between the experimental and control groups. The data were analyzed by using a t-test and the result of the t-test was compared to the t-table.

Findings

In order to assess the improvement of the students' writing, the mean scores were computed. It was found out that the mean score in the pre-test of the experimental group was 58.1 while the control group was 58.3. From the scores, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in the results of the pre-test of the experimental and the control groups. Therefore, it can be said that they were more or less at a similar level before the treatment. However, after being taught for one semester using the strategies of Think, Write, Pair, and Share, the average score of the experimental group increased to 75.8 while the control group was 64.19. The fact is that after being taught writing for one semester, both groups have a significant improvement. Surprisingly, the experimental group got a higher average score than the control group. A comparison of the results of the pre-test and post-test for both groups is shown in the following figures.

Figure I : Pre-test score of the experimental group
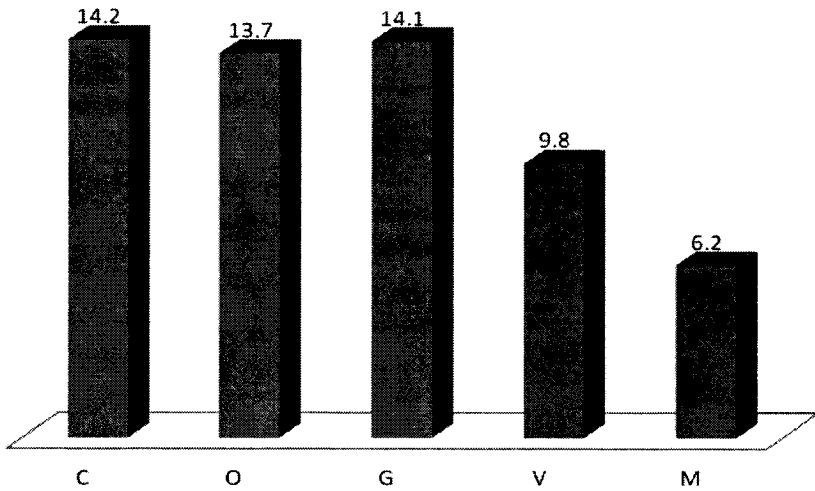
The total score of pre-test of the experimental group is 58.1.
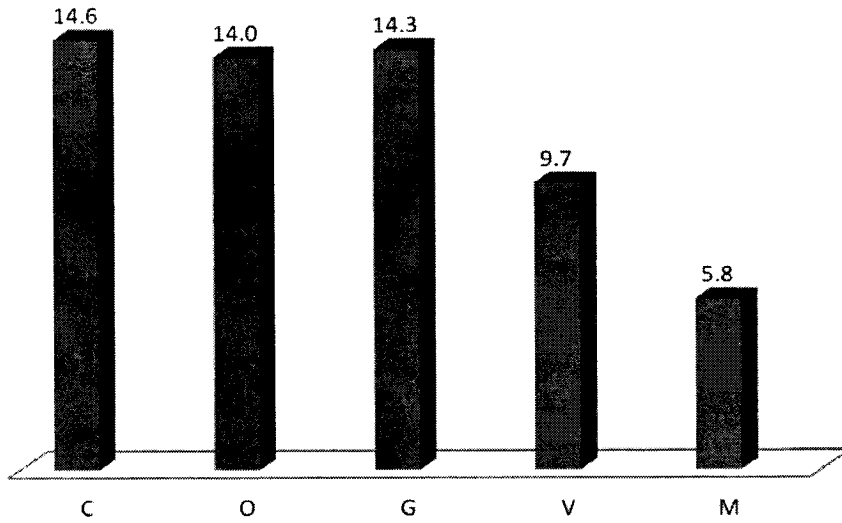
Note: C = Content   O = Organization   G = Grammar
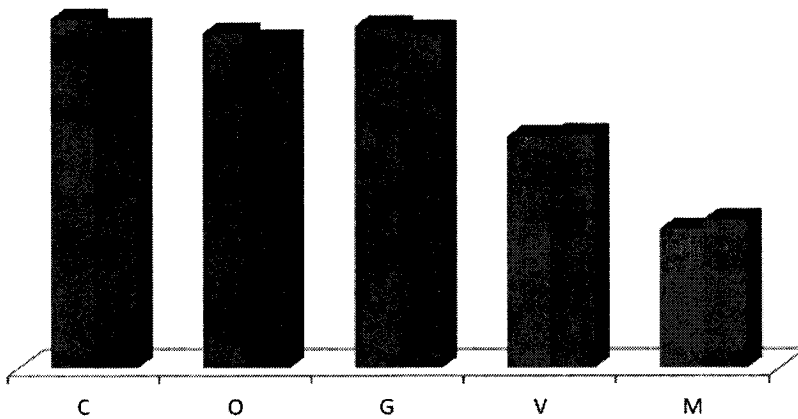   V = Vocabulary   M = Mechanic

Figure2: Pre-test score of the control group

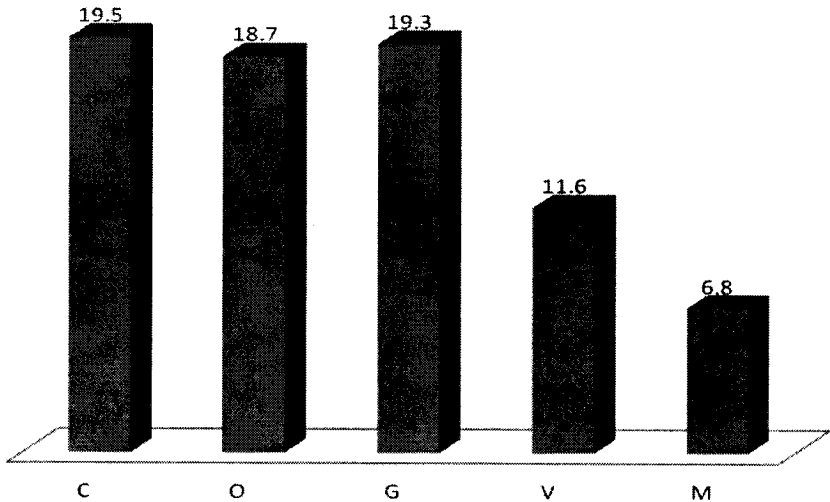The total pre-test score of the control group is 58.3.

It is clear that the experimental and control groups were similar before the treatment. The following figures show the pre-test results of both the groups.

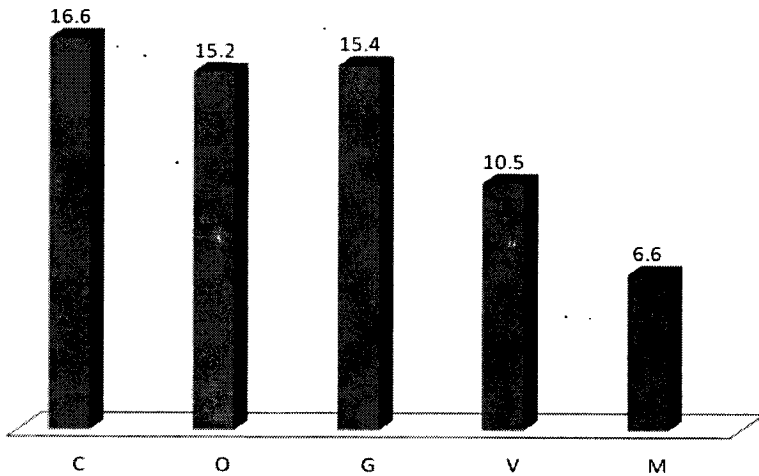Figure 3: Pre-test results of the experimental and control groups.

▪ = Pre-test score of the experimental group
▨ = Pre-test score of the control group

Figure 4: Post-test score of the experimental group

19.5	18.7	19.3	11.6	6.8
C	O	G	V	M

The total score of the post-test of the experimental group is 75.8

Figure 5: Post-test score of the control group

16.6	15.2	15.4	10.5	6.6
C	O	G	V	M

The total score of the post-test of the control group is 64.2.

Both the experimental and control groups have a significant increase after being taught writing for one semester. However, the experimental group's result is higher than that of the control group. The following figure shows the comparison between the pre-test and post test of the experimental group.

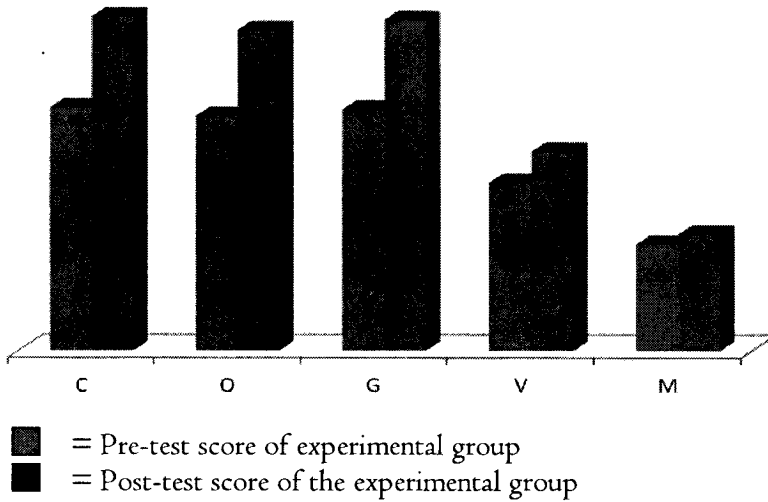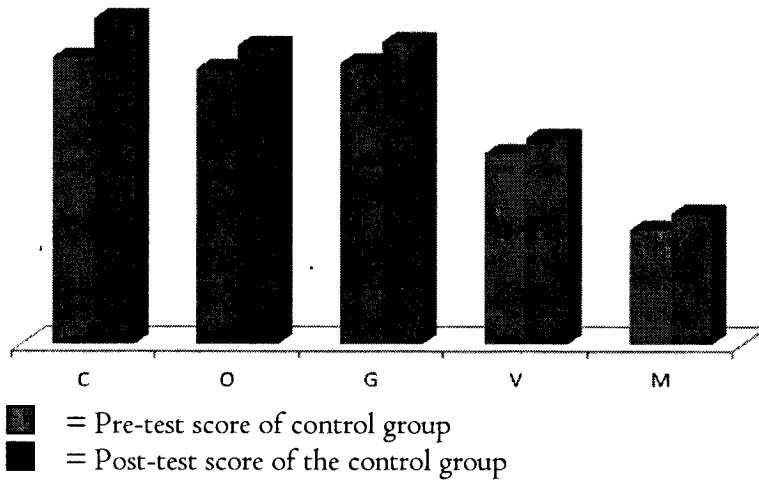Figure 6: Pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group

= Pre-test score of experimental group
= Post-test score of the experimental group

Figure 7: Pre-test and post-test scores of the control group

= Pre-test score of control group
= Post-test score of the control group

To test whether there is significant difference between the students taught writing using the strategy of Think, Write, Pair, and Share and those taught without using it., the statistics produced based on the calculations of the t-test the mean difference of $75.8 - 64.2 = 11.6$ has a t-value of 5.84. From the t-table, t.001, where df= 62 is 3.60.

Discussion

The results of the study support earlier findings (Carrs, 2007 and Prihariyani, 2011), because there was significant difference between teaching writing using the strategy of Think, Write, Pair, and Share and those taught using conventional strategies since the t-value is higher than t-table, 5,84 > 3.60,

Another significant point is the fact that some students who were considered 'slow' learners at the beginning of the semester were able to attain good results. This happened to a student whose pre-test score was 40 and 73 afterwards. It indicates that the students' competence in writing improved significantly after the treatment. In other words, the hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected

This study also indicates that the motivation of the students which was low, improved significantly after the treatment. It can be identified from the students' participation in the sharing session in which most of them responded and commented on their friends' work. The class looked friendly with a variety of arguments and comments. Thus, the results of the study suggest that the students' skill in writing can be enhanced through the application of Think, Write, Pair, and Share technique in the teaching of writing.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Think, Write, Pair, and Share strategy appears to be an effective teaching technique for writing as it gives the students an opportunity to participate in the teaching learning process. It encourages the students to be involved in learning new concepts and topics of writing and at the same time allows discussion with their friends in which they can think about relevant words or phrases that can be developed into a good piece of writing. The slow learners in this case benefit by asking their friends for ideas, words, or phrases which makes it easier for them to write without anxiety. The data show a powerful influence toward those taught writing using this technique with a higher result than those taught writing without using the treatment. The students were active in presenting what they concluded in their discussions.

Based on the research findings discussed above, it is therefore suggested that Think, Write, Pair and Share strategy in teaching writing could be applied to increase students' motivation particularly in pairing and sharing sessions. It might also be applied to speaking classes.

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