

Improving Students' Narrative Writing Achievement through Readers' Theatre Strategy

By Soni Mirizon

IMPROVING STUDENTS' NARRATIVE WRITING ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH READER'S THEATRE STRATEGY

Ririn Arsita

ririn.arsita@gmail.com

Machdalena Vianty

vianty.unsri@gmail.com

Soni Mirizon

smirizon@yahoo.com

*English Education Study Program
Faculty of Teacher Training and Education
Sriwijaya University*

Abstract: The objective of this study was to find out whether or not there were significant improvements in students' narrative writing achievement and the aspects of narrative writing between before and after the students were taught by using RT strategy. This study also investigated whether or not there was a significant difference in narrative writing achievement between the students who were taught by using RT strategy and those who were not. The sample of this study was 52 eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 6 Prabumulih, South Sumatera. There were control and experimental groups. To collect the data, each group was assigned a pretest and a post test. The data were analyzed statistically by using paired sample and independent sample t-tests. The findings showed there were significant improvements in students' narrative writing achievement and the aspects of narrative writing between before and after they were taught by using RT strategy. There was also a significant difference in narrative writing achievement between control and experimental groups. Therefore, it could be concluded that RT strategy can help improve eleventh graders' narrative writing achievement.

Keywords: *narrative writing achievement, Reader's Theatre strategy, eleventh graders*

English is the international language, therefore, it is worth saying that there will be more people learn English. English is needed not only in

language learning or educational activities, but also in almost all aspects of life, such as economy, law, and government. In addition,

English takes an important part in this modern era and is needed by people to communicate with other people around the world. Diem (2011, p. 160) states that to fulfill the needs in globalization era, English will take the strategic place in the world.

In Indonesia, English is a foreign language, but it is a compulsory subject taught at secondary school. According to the 2006 Curriculum, the aim of teaching English at senior high school is not only to make the students have a good performance in English, but also to be able to apply English in real life by developing their competence in knowledge, attitudes and skills. Reading, writing, speaking, and listening are the four vital English language skills that must be learnt by the students. Heaton (1988, p. 8) states that in many situations where English is taught for general purposes, these skills should be carefully integrated and used to perform as many genuinely communicative tasks as possible.

This present study focuses on writing, especially narrative writing. Curriculum 2006 mentions that the aim of teaching writing is to help

students to be able to express their idea to the content of functional texts in the forms of report, narrative, and analytical exposition.

Narrative is one of the most powerful ways of communicating with others (Meyers, 2005, p. 52). In addition, Anderson (1997, p. 8) states that narrative is a piece of text tells a story and, in doing so, entertains or informs the reader or listener. Similarly, in Curriculum 2006, narrative text is defined as a text which function is to amuse, entertain, and to deal with actual or various experience in different ways.

However, to produce a piece of writing is a challenge task for EFL students. The study conducted by Imron (2000) showed that Indonesian students' writing ability is the lowest in Asia. In addition, Alwasilah (2005, p. 6) also claims that the senior high school students in Indonesia do not have strong basic to write academically, since the students are not provided with sufficient writing skill and critical thinking skill.

Compared with other language skills, writing is reputed as the most difficult skill to teach and to learn as well. As Hirano (2010) point outs,

writing could be the most difficult skill to teach among the four English language skills because writing produces tangible records that allow countless revision and consist of both technical accuracy and artistic fluency. In addition, Oshima and Hogue (1985, p. 79) also point out that all writers (even professionals) complain that the most difficult part of the English application is writing. Similarly, Baskoff (1981, p. 2) states that when asked to write, many people react with anxiety because they feel they have nothing to write or just cannot get started.

The writer did interview with the English teacher at SMA N 6 Prabumulih. The eleventh graders face a very big problem in writing English. The teacher said that most of her eleventh grade students have problem with sentence structure and the incorrect word order. They also lack of vocabulary, and lack of idea on what they are going to write. In addition, they often questioned the teacher what they should write and others wrote similar story done by a friend sitting next to them or in other words, they are poor of ideas. Even though they could write the sentences, they still did not know

how to express them into sequence of sentences and organize them into chronological and coherent paragraphs.

To help the eleventh graders of SMA N 6 Prabumulih to solve the problem in narrative writing, the writer applied Reader's Theater (henceforth, RT). It was originally developed as a mean to present literary works in dramatic form. According to Leong and Boucher (2001, p. 380), RT allows students to engage in creative writing through adding and recreating lines in a story script, and by providing introductory and transitional details as they adapt a piece of literature into dramatic form. Basically, the readers first read through a piece of literary work and then write a script to produce an original dramatic production. This also was proven by Tsou (2011) in his study that teaching writing to EFL students in Taiwan by using RT strategy showed positive improvement in writing performance.

Another advantage of applying RT to EFL writing is its sociocultural function. According to Vygotsky (1986), a child's development cannot be understood by a study of the individual alone but should be

“embedded within social events and occurring as a child interacts with people, objects, and events in the environment” (p. 287). When the script rewriting process is conducted in a small group setting, social supports are performed collaboratively, and students with varying abilities work together to solve a problem or interact with each other to complete a task (Wood & Harmon, 2003). Through the cooperative scriptwriting process, peer response plays an instrumental scaffolding role, as students have to seriously consider if their lines have met the basic guidelines and plot of the story.

The objective of this study were to answer the following research question: (1) is there any significant improvement in narrative writing achievement of the eleventh grade students of SMA N 6 Prabumulih before and after they are taught by using RT strategy? (2) is there any significant improvement in each aspect of narrative writing achievement of the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 6 Prabumulih after they are taught by using RT strategy? (3) is there any significant improvement in narrative

writing achievement of the eleventh grade students of SMA N 6 Prabumulih who are taught by using RT strategy and those who are not?

METHODOLOGY

This study applied a quasi experimental research method. The population of this study was the second year of SMA N 6 Prabumulih in the academic year 2014-2015. There were the eight classes with the total number of 211 students as the population and the sample was 52 students. The sample of this study was taken from the population by using a convenience sampling. The school allowed the writer to access XI.IPA 3 and XI.IPA 4 because they were available. Those two classes were taught by the same English teacher. From the 2 classes, the writer took one class as the experimental group and the other class as the control group. Therefore, the experimental and control groups were decided by flipping a coin. The experimental group (X1. IPA.4) was taught by using RT strategy. The students work in groups. Each group was given the same story. Each group discussed to recreate the story, so each member of groups had

contribution upon the completion of the story.

Next, both experimental and control groups were assigned a writing test in the form of pretest and posttest. The test was constructed based on content validity; the writer asked for expert judgment and also got feedback from her thesis advisors.

To check the reliability of writing test statistically, inter rater reliability was used. Two raters scored the test by using a rubric, and the data gathered from those two raters were analyzed by the writer by using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Based on the analyses, the reliability coefficient of pretest and posttest of experimental group and pretest and posttest of control group consecutively were 0.832, 0.718, 0.860, and 0.718. All of the reliability coefficients were higher than 0.7, thus the test was reliable.

The data from pretest and posttest that had been checked by the raters were analyzed by using paired sample and independent sample t test. Paired sample t-test was used to analyze data gathered from pretest and posttest of experimental group, also to find the significant improvement in each aspect of narrative writing in the experimental group, whereas independent sample t-test was used to analyze data gathered from experimental group and control group.

FINDINGS Results of Students' Narrative Writing Achievement

The results of students' narrative writing achievement were described based on five categories: Excellent, Good, Average, Poor, and Fail. The score interval was between 1-100. The distribution of overall scores in the experimental and control groups is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Score Distribution of Experimental and Control Groups

Score Interval	Category	Control Group				Experimental Group			
		Pretest		Posttest		Pretest		Posttest	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
86 - 100	Excellent	-	0	-	0	-	0	7	26.92
71 - 85	Good	1	3.84	8	30.76	1	3.84	15	57.69
56 - 70	Average	15	57.6	15	57.69	13	50	4	15.38
41 - 55	Poor	7	26.9	3	11.53	9	34.61	-	0
0 - 40	Failed	3	11.5	-	0	3	11.53	-	0
Total		26	100	26	100	26	100	26	100

Table 1 shows that based on the result of pretest, three students (11.53 %) in the experimental group were in the Failed category and nine students (34.61 %) were in the Poor category. However, the result of posttest showed that there was improvement in the students' scores.

The result of posttest showed that no students belong to Poor and Fail categories. The writer found that seven students (26.92 %) of the experimental group were in Excellent category, while other fifteen students (57.69 %) in Good category, 4 students (15.38 %) in Average category. Table 1 also shows that seven students (26.92 %) were in Poor category, three student (11.53%) was in Failed category, fifteen students (57.69 %) were in Average category, one student (3.84%) was in Good category, and no students (0%) in Excellent category.

The result of the posttest showed that there were three students (11.53 %) were in Poor category, there was no students in Failed category, fifteen students (57.69%) were in Average category, and eight students (30.76 %) were in Good category

and no students (0%) in Excellent category. There was also improvement in the control group's mean score.

Result of Paired Sample t-test and Independent t-test

Before conducting a statistical analysis, the normality of the data distribution was checked. Each of the data from the pretest and post test from experimental and control group was analyzed. By using One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. Based on the results, the significance value of pretest and posttest data of experimental group were 1.142 and 1.045, while data from pretest and post test of control group were 0.904 and 0.912. Priyatno (2008, p. 28) states that the data can be said having a normal distribution if the $p > 0.05$. The results showed that the value from both group were higher than 0.05, it can be concluded that the data obtained were considered normal. Then, homogeneity tests were done to know whether the sample groups from the population had similar variances. The writer used Levene's test to know the homogeneity in groups (experimental and control groups).

Next, paired sampel t-test analysis was applied to answer research questions number 1 (*Was there any significant improvement in narrative writing achievement of the*

eleventh grade students of SMA N 6 Prabumulih before and after they were taught by using RT strategy?). The result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Result of Paired Sample t-test for Students' Narrative Writing Achievement of Experimental and Control Groups

Groups	Test	Mean	Mean Diff	Std. Dev	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Experimental Group	Pretest	55.19	24.71	11.33	2.22	10.13	25	.000
	Posttest	79.90		7.95	1.55			
Control Group	Pretest	58.17	8.84	11.96	2.34	3.30	25	.003
	Posttest	67.01		8.54	1.67			

Based on the result of paired sample t-test in the experimental group, the mean score of the posttest (79.90) was higher than the mean score of the pretest (55.19) with the mean difference 24.71. Since the *p-value* was less than 0.05 (0.000 < 0.05), it could be concluded that there was a significant difference between the mean score of pretest and posttest of the experimental. Meanwhile, the results of paired sample t-test in the control group showed that the mean score of the posttest (67.01) was higher than the mean score of the pretest (58.17) and

the mean difference was 8.84. The *p-value* was less than 0.05 (0.000 < 0.05) it can be concluded that there was also significant improvement in the control group.

To see the significant improvement in each aspect of narrative writing achievement in experimental group, paired sample t-test analysis was also applied. Based on the result of the analysis, the significant improvement of each aspect of narrative writing achievement can be seen in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3. Result of Paired Sample t-test for Each Aspect of Narrative Writing (Experimental Group)

Aspect of Narrative Writing	Exp Group		Mean dif	Std. Dev	Sig.
	Pre	Post			
Purpose	12.59	16.44	3.84	2.93	.000
Narrative Dep.	11.05	17.40	6.34	3.25	.000
Structure	10.57	15.96	5.38	3.21	.000
Style	10.57	15.76	5.19	3.23	.000
Conventions	10.48	14.13	3.65	3.01	.000

Table 4. Result of Paired Sample t-test for Each Aspect of Narrative Writing (Control Group)

Aspect of Narrative Writing	Cg Group		Mean dif	Std. Dev	Sig.
	Pre	Post			
Purpose	12.88	14.51	1.63	2.73	.005
Narrative Dep.	12.09	13.46	1.44	2.84	.016
Structure	11.44	13.65	2.21	3.48	.003
Style	11.25	12.88	1.63	4.11	.054
Conventions	10.96	11.82	.86	2.91	.142

The data shown in Table 3 and 4 revealed the improvement of narrative writing score from five aspects, namely *Purpose*, *Narrative Development*, *Structure*, *Style*, and *Conventions*.

There was significant improvement in each aspect of the students' narrative writing achievement score. It means that there was significant improvement in each aspect of students' narrative writing achievement after being taught by using RT strategy.

In the control group, there was also significant improvement in each

aspect of narrative writing although it was not higher than the experimental group. Based on the table, there was one aspect of narrative writing in the control group which was not improved, that is *Convention*.

To see the difference between pretest and posttest score of both experimental and control groups, independent sample t-test was done. The result of Independent sample t-test of pretest and posttest of both groups is presented in the following table.

Table 4. Results of Independent Sample t-test (Experimental and Control Groups)

Pretest					Posttest				
Group	Mean	Mean diff	Std Dev	Sig.p	Group	Mean	Mean diff	Std Dev	Sig.p
Exp	55.19		11.33	.361	Exp	79.90		6.63	.000
Cg	58.17	-2.98	11.96		Cg	67.01	12.88	8.39	

The result of independent sample t-test showed that, the mean of pretest of control group was higher than experimental group (58.17>55.19) and p value >0.005 (0.361>0.005). Since p value > 0.005, it means that there was no significant difference in pretest of narrative writing achievement of both experimental and control group.

The mean score of the posttest in the experimental group was higher than the mean score of the posttest in the control group (79.90>67.01). Since the p -value (sig. (2-tailed)) was less than 0.05 (0.000 < 0.05), it can be concluded that there was significant difference in the posttest between the experimental and control group.

To see the contribution of each aspect of narrative writing achievement towards the students' narrative writing achievement on the experimental group, stepwise regression analysis was used. Although finding the contribution of each aspects of narrative writing achievement was not the focus of this study, but the writer considered it was important to know which aspect that gave more contribution for students' narrative writing achievement score. The result of the analysis is presented in the following table.

Table 5 shows that each aspect of narrative writing gave significant contribution to the students' narrative writing achievement score.

Table 5. Contributions of aspects of narrative writing towards students' narrative writing achievement

Model	R	R ²	Change Statistics	
			R Square Change	Sig. F Change
Style	.858	.736	.736	.000
Style , Narrative Development	.946	.894	.159	.000
Style , Narrative Development, Purpose	.974	.948	.054	.000
Style , Narrative	.989	.979	.031	.000

Development, Purpose, Structure				
Style , Narrative Development, Purpose, Structure, Convention	.994	.988	.009	

Style gave contribution 73.6%, *Narrative* *Depelovment* 15.9%, *Purpose* 5.4%, *Structure* 3.1%, *Convention* 0.9%. The result showed that the aspect of narrative writing that gave the highest contribution was *Style* and the lowest was *Convention*.

INTERPRETATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, some interpretations are drawn. The findings show that (1) there was a significant improvement in narrative writing achievement of experimental group before and after given treatment, and (2) there was significant improvement in each aspect of narrative writing achievement after they were taught by using RT strategy (3) there was a significant difference in students' narrative writing achievement of both experimental and control group.

The first finding showed that there was significant improvement in narrative writing achievement of experimental group before and after they were given the treatment. It can

be seen from the mean difference of students' narrative writing test in pretest and post test. The mean difference between pretest and posttest in the experimental group was 24.71 at the significance level of $p < 0.05$, H_0 was rejected and there was a significant difference in narrative writing achievement between pretest and posttest of experimental group. The improvement itself could happen because after the experimental group was assigned pretest, the writer gave them the treatment by using RT strategy for more than one month.

There was also improvement in control group although it was not really significant. However, the experimental group showed much better improvement than the control group. Thus, it can be stated that the use of RT strategy in the experimental group gave significance contribution in improving students' narrative writing achievement.

There are two reasons why RT strategy can improve students' narrative writing achievement.

Firstly, RT strategy offers an interesting way of learning in which they have to build a story completion by recreate the script by portray the text. By RT strategy, each student was motivated to recreate the story however they wanted because they decided to portray the story plot themselves, the characters and the setting based on the script was given. It is also in line with the finding of Tsou (2011) the writing of scripts involved all aspects of language, RT strategy should enable EFL learners to acquire language in a real communicative context and allows creativity.

Secondly, RT strategy engage students in creative writing through adding and recreating the script. It is also supported by Tsou (2011) writing a RT script is a great way to encourage writing and to bridge EFL reading and writing skills.

The findings of this study also revealed that there was a significant improvement in each aspect of students' narrative writing achievement in experimental group. It can be proven from the statistical analysis done by paired sample t test analysis that showed all the aspects of narrative writing achievement was

significant. This could happen because during the treatment, they were exposed to many stories which helped them to know how to build a story plot. They knew how to express their idea into good sentences along with their creativity in writing the story.

It was found out that before the students were exposed to RT strategy, the students were lack of variety in sentence structure. They had difficulties to convey the expressions meaningfully and use figurative language in the text and tone. However, as they got the treatment, they gained many figurative languages. The score of the aspect of writing *-Style-* improved. As explained by Callard (2008), RT strategy is a way to promote repeated reading in a meaningful and engaging manner. It helps students to convey meaning through expression and intonation.

The students were confused to define the storyline development in a text. They also got confused how detecting conflicts between characters, and how those conflicts will be resolved. RT strategy help the students improved the aspect of writing *-Narrative Development;*

they could be able to make good sentences that coherence to support the purpose of their story.

RT helped the students improved the aspect *Purpose*. Before the treatment, the students did not mention the clear purpose of the text; they directly developed the character in the text. After the exposure of RT, the students were able to state the purpose of a narrative text.

Before the treatment, the students still had difficulties to organizes detail and chronology to support the purpose of the story. Sometimes they also neglected the organization of detail and chronology of the story. RT helped them improve the *Structure* aspect. They practiced to create the script that helped them developed a coherent structure that provided a strong reflective sense.

The students also still had difficulties to define the theme and setting of the story before the treatment. At first, their story contained errors that generally did not distract from meaning. After the treatment, the aspect of writing *Convention* improved. As Tsou (2011) reported, reading scripts over and over again to get the parts right

helps readers construct meaning, which can then allow continued development of the related skills.

The other finding of this present study also confirmed that there was a significant difference in narrative writing achievement between experimental and control groups. The mean difference between the posttest and pretest in the experimental group was higher than the mean difference between posttest and pretest in the control group. It can be stated that there was significant difference in students' narrative writing achievement both of experimental and control groups. There was also an improvement in control group's narrative writing achievement although it was not as much as the experimental group. The control group was only given pretest and posttest.

However, during the teaching and learning activity, the students also learned about narrative story. Mostly, the teacher gave them explanation about the generic structure of the narrative. They were barely exposed to create a story, they were only asked to answer questions related with the story and were insisted to know which was the

7 orientation, complication and resolution.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that the experimental group performed better than control group. It could be concluded that the students who received the treatment have significant improvement in narrative writing achievement. Although the score of control group increased as well, the increasing was not high as the score of the experimental group was. Therefore, it can be stated that RT strategy was effective to increase narrative writing achievement of the experimental group. Hence, using RT strategy is considered effective in teaching narrative writing to the eleventh grade students of SMA N 6 Prabumulih.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The writer concluded that the use of RT strategy is proven to be effective in improving narrative writing. The students' narrative writing result in posttest of experimental group showed that there was a significant improvement in narrative writing before and after being taught by using RT strategy, and also there were some

contribution given by each aspect of narrative writing to the improvement of writing. RT strategy also helped students to be an active student because each of them needs to contribute in building the story. Moreover, it created an enjoyable learning atmosphere where they needed to guess how the story would become and what they should give to keep the story more interesting and unpredictable.

Referring to the conclusion, the writer proposes some suggestions for the betterment of teaching English especially narrative writing to the students. For the teachers, the writer hopes that RT strategy can be considered as one of ways to be used in teaching English especially to improve their narrative writing. It can help the students become more creative in developing their imagination which can help them to improve their writing skill.

Lastly, the writer hopes this study becomes a reference for next researchers who are interested in conducting a study to improve the students' achievement in writing narrative text by using RT strategy. It is suggested that other researchers have more number of sampling and

provide more types of story in teaching and learning activities.

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About the authors

Ririn Arsita, S.Pd is the graduate of the English Education Study

Program, Faculty of teacher Training
and Education, Sriwijaya University.
Machdalena Vianty, M.Ed., M.Pd.,
Ed.D and Soni Mirizon, M.A., Ed.D

are the lecturers at English Education
Study Program, Faculty of teacher
Training and Education, Sriwijaya
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