

**PEER ASSESSMENT FOR IMPROVING WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT  
OF THE TENTH GRADERS OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL  
SETIA BUDHI SEMARANG**

**Wiwik Yully Widyawati**

English Education Department of University of PGRI Indraprasta

[Wiwik121@gmail.com](mailto:Wiwik121@gmail.com),

**ABSTRACT**

*The problems of the study can be formulated as follows (1) How effective is peer assessment technique applied to students with low and high grammar ability in writing descriptive text?, (2) How effective is teacher assessment technique applied to students with high and low grammar ability in writing descriptive text, (3) Is there any significant interaction among grammar ability, peer assessment technique and writing ability. The research design employed in this study was Experimental Design (factorial design) consisting of a pre test, and post test for control group design and Experiment group. This research involved three variables which consisted of dependent variable (writing ability), independent variable (Peer Assessment Technique) and Grammar ability as moderator. This study found that peer assessment technique can be used to give practice in writing as well as in conducting this technique for teaching writing because it had given effect to the student writing descriptive text. It can be proven from the students' score. Through this technique, the students could develop and improve their skill either in writing, grammar or vocabulary. They also became responsible to asses their friend's work and increased their motivation. So, this technique of peer assessment should be used to improve English writing and grammar skill and an English teacher must improve his knowledge in English teaching method so the goal of teaching is gained.*

**Key Words:** *Writing, Descriptive texts, Peer Assessment Technique*

**INTRODUCTION**

Language is a means of communication. They can express their idea through language both in written and spoken form.

English has been announced by the state as the first foreign language to learn at school. Hence, English has been taught from Elementary school up to University because

development of English Science and technology is more needed and important. The major purpose of teaching English is the development of four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

The four language skills should be included in learning process. They should be taught to the students in every semester. Yet, there are some problems to learn it. One of the problems which are usually faced by the

students is writing. Writing has been characterized as written and creative thinking. The students are encouraged to express their ideas, experience, thoughts and feelings.

According to Celce-Murcia (2001: 213) says that writing is a skill which enables the learners to plan and rethink the communication process. It means that to create a good writing, the writers need to employ all their thought and knowledge. So, they needs to learn and practices in order to achieve good writing.

In the fact, there are many students who still have many problems in writing. They usually make mistakes in constructing the text and its language feature especially in grammar. Grammar is one of component of language. Therefore if the students make mistake in grammar, they will make mistake in constructing sentence. Because of it, they become lazy and unconfident in writing activities so that they cannot write good English in essay.

Harmer (2004 : 60) stated that although some students are always happy to have a go at writing in English, others can be less keen. This willingness may derive from anxiety they have about their handwriting, spelling, or their ability to construct sentence and paragraph. And if these insecurities are reinforced because they are unable to complete writing is likely to become more and more negative (Harmer, 2004: 61).

Peer assessment is an assessment method through which the peers of candidates or students are requested to provide information about his performance (Heather, 2000: 2). It is considered by many educators and teachers to be a key technique to get students to take more responsibility for their learning. Reinders and Lazaró (2007:25) claimed that if it conducted appropriately, peer assessment can provide numerous

benefits for the learners. Peer-assessment has the advantage of helping students to critically examine the learning in progress. Through this, students understand their own learning better. It also helps the students to foster collaboration skills and improve autonomy. Topping (2002: 10) defines peer assessment as a process in which individuals judge the amount, level, value, quality, or success of the outcomes of their peers.

From what has been presented above, it is clear that assessment of writing ability is important. The new paradigm in assessment suggests that alternative assessment is used with students being involved in assessment, among others with peer assessment. This technique also has many advantages. Therefore, the situations above have led the researcher's interests to investigate the effect of peer assessment technique in improvement of writing students' descriptive text on tenth grades. This study attempts to search the effect of peer assessment in improvement of writing.

### **The Problems of the Study**

The problems of the study can be formulated as follows (1) How effective is peer assessment technique applied to students with low and high grammar ability in writing descriptive text?, (2) How effective is teacher assessment technique applied to students with high and low grammar ability in writing descriptive text, (3) Is there any significant interaction among grammar ability, peer assessment technique and writing ability

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **The Essence of Writing**

As one of the language skill, writing demands the students to master it well to help them in expressing their thought, feeling, and ideas. Celce-Murcia (2001: 213) says that writing is a skill which enables the learners to plan and

rethink the communication process. It means that to create a good writing, the writers need to employ all their thought and knowledge.

### **Description text**

According to Gerot and Wignel (2003: 208) "Description is texts that function to describe a particular person, place or things". The Generic structure of description text is divided into two elements. They are: (a) Identification: identifies phenomenon to be described, (b) Description : describes parts, qualities, characteristics. There are four significant lexicogrammatical features to support Descriptive text, they are: (a) Focus on Specific Participant, (b) Use of Attributive and Identifying Processes, (c) Frequent use of Epithets and Classifiers in nominal groups, (d) Use of Simple Present Tense

### **Peer Assessment**

Assessment is the act of gathering information on a daily basis in order to understand individual students learning and needs

(<http://www.saked.gov.sk.ca/docs/mla/found.html>).

There are types of assessment and evaluation that occur regularly throughout the school year, as suggested in "assessment and evaluation"(<http://saked.gov.sk.ca/docs/mla/found.html.2003> ) They are : diagnostic, formative, and summative.

Hancock (2003: 8) states that alternative assessment is an ongoing process involving the student and teacher in making judgments about the student's progress in language using non-conventional strategies. This implies that, as opposed to the traditional assessment, student involvement in assessment is a characteristic of alternative assessment.

### **Criteria of Good Assessment**

Some criteria of good assessment have been pointed out by Rudner, L. and W Schafer (2002: 5) as follows: It enhances instructions, valid, fair and ethical, uses multiple methods, efficient and feasible, appropriately incorporate technology,

### **Peer Assessment in Education**

Particularly for education, peer assessment has been promoted as an exercise for life long learning, developing metacognitive skills, and developing student's responsibility for their own learning (zariski, 2000: 2).

Bostock (2000:4) suggests that it encourages students' autonomy and higher order thinking skills. The distinctive feature of higher education is the learning and assessment of "higher order thinking skills, "including assessing and evaluating (Heywood, as quoted by Bostock, 2000:5). Ramsden also includes in the aims of higher education independent judgment and critical self awareness (Ramsden, as quoted by Bostock, 2000:6).

### **Advantages and Disadvantages of Peer Assessment**

The following are advantages of peer assessment for students as summarized from Bostock (2000: 6) and from Kirkpatrick and Fuller (2001: 6): Enhancing learning outcomes, Learning skill of self assessment and evaluation, Giving a sense of ownership of the assessment process, improving motivation, Seeing a greater range of performance standards, Encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning, developing them as autonomous learner, Learning to evaluate and provide feedback to peers, etc

In spite of the advantages of peer assessment, it can cause potential problems which need to be taken into account. Kirkpatrick and Fuller (2001:8) point out the following disadvantages of peer assessment: Possible students' reluctance to participate; Students' lack of knowledge of criteria, Students' unfamiliarity with assessment technique, Students' reluctance to fail peers, etc. To overcome these problems, Kirkpatrick and Fuller (2001: 8) point out the possible solutions as follows: Training students to mark effectively like Changing students' attitudes and encouraging them to participate positively, Establish the existing attitudes, Work through issues relating to learning and real world, Identify current self and peer evaluation practices, Identify those with prior experience; Dealing with the affective side of peer assessment (teacher and students) like Reducing weight of assessment (at least at first), Use information and statistics to show it is at least as reliable as other forms of assessment, Provide positive information about the benefits, Provide opportunity for conflict resolution, Be proactive, explain, negotiate, resolve, Use of class time for marking, Students mark more than one paper and Share responsibility for marking.

## **THE RESEARCH METHOD**

This research was an experimental research involving two groups (23 students), an experimental group and a control group (23 students). This research was initiated by deciding the problem of teaching writing which is difficult. It was followed by preparing pre test for both groups. Before doing pre-test, the students do grammar test

to know the grade either high or low. The next steps of this study are trying out of pre-test to try out of class before it was given to both groups. Trying out was used to measure whether the try out was valid and reliable or not. After tried out, the pre test was canalized and then given to both the experiment group and the control group. The students' pre test score was to see the starting point and to determine whether the two groups could be accepted as sample or not in this research. The next step was determining an alternative method to solve the problems. Teaching writing using peer assessment was chosen as the alternative method. Treatment to teach writing through peer assessment was done in the experiment group, while the conventional teaching of writing or the teaching writing through teacher assessment was done in the control group. This lasted in four meetings. The last step done was post test. It was to get the data about the result of the treatments in the experiment group. The post test was also given to control group after taught using conventional method of teaching writing. The post test compared to the pre test to see the effect peer assessment to the students in mastering writing. The average difference of the post test score both groups will be used to see the effect of peer assessment to teach writing.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **First Analysis**

The first analysis is getting the good instrument for the investigation. The results of the students' writing descriptive texts used as the analysis were the documentation of all scores obtained by each student after joining learning activity through the application of

two methods or techniques, they were the experimental group by using peer assessment technique and control group by using teacher assessment.

The students' writing descriptive result taken from post- test after the treatment given was the result of exercising process. The results showed that scores were obtained from the students' writing descriptive texts.

The process was done by each group after determining the amount of score by each group, the number of value square, mean, and standard deviation. The summary of the values can be seen in table 4.1.

**Table 1. The Summary of Research Result**

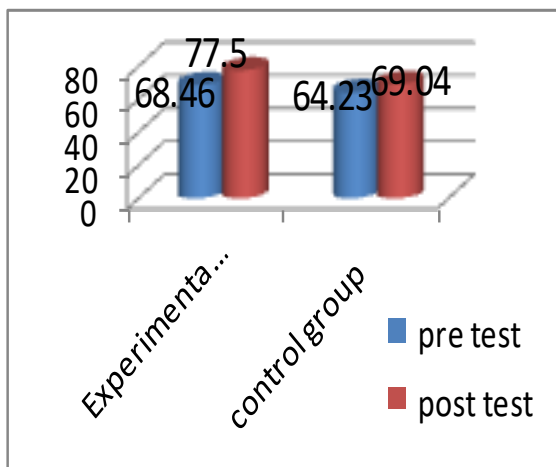
<i>GRAMMAR ABILITY</i>	Methods	
	Peer Assessment (A <sub>1</sub> )	Teacher Assessment (A <sub>2</sub> )
<i>HIGH (B1)</i>	$X_1 = 1165$ $X_{1\text{mean}} = 89.62$ $X_1^2 = 104675$ $SD = 4.77$ $N_1 =$	$X_2 = 985$ $X_{2\text{mean}} = 75.77$ $X_2^2 = 74975$ $SD = 5.34$ $N_2 = 10$

	10	
<i>LOW (B2)</i>	$X_3 = 920$ $X_{3\text{mean}} = 707.77$ $X_3^2 = 65350$ $SD = 4.49$ $N_3 = 10$	$X_4 = 810$ $X_{4\text{mean}} = 62.31$ $X_4^2 = 50600$ $SD = 3.30$ $N_4 = 10$

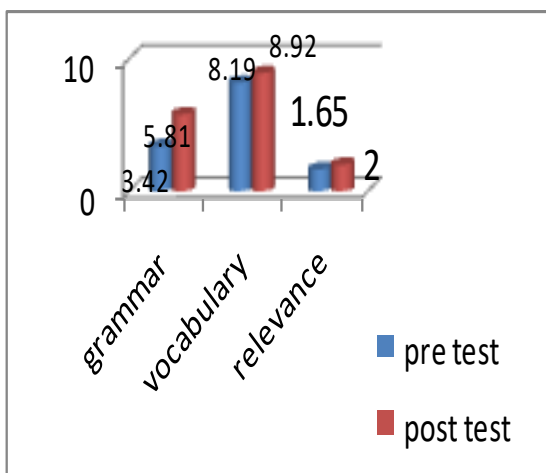
**The result of the average score in pre- test, post test of experimental and control group.**

The data were obtained from the students' achievement score of writing descriptive texts. They were administered pre- test for both experiment and control group. The average score for experimental group for the students have high and low grammar were 78.08 and 58.85 for pre-test and 89.62 and 70.77 as post-test. While the average score for control group had high and low grammar were 73.08 and 55.38 for pre-test and 75.77 and 69.04 for post test.

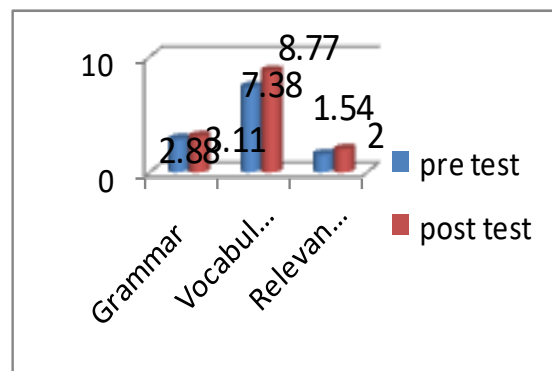
**Chart 1 The Result of Average Score in Pre Test, Post Test of Experiment and Control Group**



**Chart 2 The Result of the Experiment Group's Average Scores on Each Writing Scoring**



**Chart 3 The Result of the Control Group's Average Scores on Each Writing Scoring**



**DISCUSSION**

Below is the description of the test writing ability applied to students with high and low grammar ability by using peer assessment and teacher assessment technique. The result of the pre test applied to the students with high grammar ability by using peer assessment showed that the highest score was 85, the lowest was 70. The mean score was 78.08. If it is consulted to the grade classification of writing, the mean achievement belongs to good grade, while for control group or by using teacher assessment, the highest score was 80 and the lowest score was 70. The mean score was 73.08. If it is consulted to the grade classification of writing, the mean achievement belongs to good grade. That means both of the groups have more or less the same achievement in their pre-test for the students with high grammar ability. On the other hand, the result of the pre test applied to the students with low grammar ability by using peer assessment and teacher assessment technique showed that the highest score were 65 and 60, the lowest were 45 and 45. The mean score were 58.85 and 55.38. If it is consulted to the

grade classification of writing, the mean achievement belongs to poor grade. That means both of the groups have more or less the same achievement in their pre-test for the students' low grammar.

The result of post test the writing descriptive text applied to the students with high grammar ability by using peer assessment showed that the highest score was 95, the lowest was 80. While for control group or by using teacher assessment, the highest score was 85 and the lowest score was 65. The mean score was 75.77. If it is consulted to the grade classification of writing, the mean achievement belongs to good grade. In the contrary, the result of post test the writing descriptive text applied to the students with low grammar ability by using peer assessment showed that the highest score was 75, the lowest was 60.

Based on the explanation above, it was found that peer assessment technique was an appropriate technique applied in writing descriptive texts. First, the writer ought to concern to explain about peer assessment technique to the students. It was done because students were not acquaintance this technique which was considered as a new technique. Second, the writer provided the instrument used in this activity such as paper that had been fulfilled the writing descriptive texts. After all had been done, the teacher explained to the students about what the students should do with that paper on them.

Third, the implementation of peer assessment technique would be held in the classroom. As stated in the theory, peer assessment is defined as a process in which students assess the quality of their fellow

students' work and provide each other with feedback. Here, the students began analyzed and assessed the writing that they handled based on the rubric. After they have finished, the teacher discussed the result of the students assessing. They were practiced to analyze that text whether they had assessed correctly or incorrectly. So, from these practicing, the teacher hoped they can know the mistake they made. The teacher practiced them like the same activity twice.

The result of the data analysis showed that the use of peer assessment technique gave effect for improving the students' writing descriptive texts seemed to be applicable for the tenth grade students of senior high school *Setia Budi* Semarang. This technique helped the students to solve the problem in writing descriptive texts and to be responsible for the work. In addition, the students were more motivated, active in the learning activity, got better understanding and had better achievement.

In applying peer assessment technique, it was found some advantages and disadvantages. The advantages were the students can improve their skill especially in grammar. It was caused by the need of each students analyze its aspect. Another advantage was encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning. It assumed that if they did mistake in assessing, their friend won't believe them and their score would be decrease. On the other hand, the disadvantage was it took long time. It is caused the process of writing and assessment must need long time. So, when there is writing lesson, the teacher should take and use time appropriately or choose the schedule

which long time. Another disadvantage was students' lack of knowledge criteria and collusion between students. One of the alternatives is the teacher gave brief information, practiced and explained the criteria clearly and appropriately. To overcome the problem of collusion between students, the teacher should give the punishment like the teacher would decrease the score of corrector if made mistake in assessing writing.

## CONCLUSION

After applying all the steps of the research, the writer comes to the conclusion that there was a difference between the influences of significance peer assessment techniques to writing skills. The influence of peer assessment technique was better than teacher assessment techniques. It could be seen through the result of the mean of the student's writing descriptive texts achievement.

The result of the students' writing ability applied to students with high grammar ability by using peer assessment technique was in the range between 80 until 95, the mean was 89.62, and standard deviation was 4.77. Thus, it is classified into grade very good. The result of the students' writing ability applied to students with high grammar ability by using teacher assessment technique was in the range 65 until 85, the mean was 75.76, and standard deviation was 5.34. Thus, it is classified into grade good. So, it was concluded that technique peer assessment is better than teacher assessment technique and it also peer assessment technique improved the students' writing descriptive texts.

The result of the students' writing ability applied to students with low grammar ability by using peer assessment technique was in the range between 60 until 75, the mean was 70.00 and standard deviation was 4.56. Thus, it was classified into grade fair. While the result of the students' writing ability applied to the students with low grammar ability by using teacher assessment technique was in the range between 55 until 65, the mean was 62.30 and standard deviation was 3.30. Thus, it was classified into grade fair. The both peer assessment and teacher assessment techniques applied to the students with low grammar ability in writing descriptive text were very fair.

Based on the explanation above, it could be concluded that there was a difference significant the effective of the technique between students applied to students with high and low grammar ability in writing skills. Writing skills in students with high grammar skills were better than students with low grammar skills; there was a significant interaction between grammar skills, technique peer assessment of writing ability in which Students had high grammar ability who applied to the peer assessment technique had the ability in writing better than students with high grammar skills applied to teacher assessment techniques and Students who had low grammar skills applied to a peer assessment technique had the ability in writing better than students had low grammar skills applied to teacher assessment

The students' writing result by using peer assessment was better than by using teacher assessment. It was proven from the result of calculation inter column of 78.537



showed the value is higher than  $F'_{table}$  of 4.03 at the significance level of 5% thus  $H_0$  was not acceptable, so it can be concluded that there was a differences from students' writing which have the significance correlation between peer assessment and teacher assessment.

Interaction between grammar ability and the method of assessment in writing ability has influence. It is proven by the calculation of Two ways ANOVA. The Two Ways ANOVA calculation result as shown in the table above showed that  $F_{value}$  was 4.576 indicates the value was higher than  $F_{table}$  of 4.043 at the significance level of 5 %, Students who have low grammar skills applied to a peer assessment technique have the ability in writing better than students have low grammar skills applied to teacher assessment

### SUGGESTION

After doing the research, the writer hopes the findings will give advantages to the area education, particularly in scope of Senior High School *Setia Budi* Semarang. Hopefully, the teacher concern better in their technique variety in teaching writing texts and components of good writing: grammar, vocabulary, relevance, spelling, etc. it is done because many students still made some mistakes in using the correct form of grammar, vocabulary, and relevance. The teacher may use some techniques in teaching writing texts. The teacher should apply grammar correction in writing class so that the students could alleviate the difficulties in writing. Then, they concern better in deciding the topic which will be written based on the

students' interest, so that the students could result the good writings.

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