Students' Writing Augmentation Through Vocabulary, Connective, Opener, and Punctuation (VCOP) Strategy

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Abstract

This study was grounded in the observation that students often encounter challenges when attempting to initiate the introductory paragraph of a descriptive text due to insufficient command of vocabulary. Hence, this experimental research employed the VCOP strategy as a viable approach with the purpose was to enhance students' vocabulary, thereby influencing their writing skills. The research was conducted at SMK Negeri 5 Langsa, with X3 assigned as the experimental class and X5 as the control class. Each class comprised 32 students. The instruments employed in this study were pre-test and post-test. The findings indicated that the implementation of the VCOP was successful in enhancing students' writing proficiency. The statistical finding showed that the post-test score of the Experimental Group (EG) was greater than those of the Control Group (CG). The discrepancy between 69.38 and 57.19 was calculated to be 12.19. This disparity suggested that the administered treatment had a positive impact on pupils' learning outcomes. Furthermore, the t-test value of -3.8 obtained in this study exceeded the predetermined threshold, indicating a significant difference between the two groups. Consequently, the alternative hypothesis was accepted whereas the null hypothesis was rejected. The findings suggest that the academic performance of the experimental group was superior to that of the control group. Hence, VCOP is believed as an alternative strategy to be applied in writing classroom.

Keyword: *Descriptive text, VCOP, Writing*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini didasarkan pada pengamatan bahwa siswa sering menghadapi kesulitan ketika mencoba memulai paragraf pengantar teks deskriptif disebabkan kurangnya penguasaan kosakata. Oleh karena itu, penelitian eksperimental ini menggunakan strategi VCOP sebagai pendekatan yang tepat dengan tujuan untuk meningkatkan kosakata siswa, yang akan mempengaruhi keterampilan menulis mereka. Penelitian ini dilakukan di SMK Negeri 5 Langsa, dengan kelas X3 sebagai kelas eksperimen dan kelas X5 sebagai kelas kontrol. Masing-

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masing kelas terdiri dari 32 siswa. Instrumen yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah pre-test dan post-test. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan VCOP berhasil meningkatkan kemampuan menulis siswa. Temuan statistik menunjukkan bahwa nilai post-test dari Kelompok Eksperimen (EG) lebih besar daripada Kelompok Kontrol (CG). Perbedaan antara 69,38 dan 57,19 dihitung menjadi 12,19. Perbedaan ini menunjukkan bahwa perlakuan yang diberikan memiliki dampak positif pada hasil belajar siswa. Selain itu, nilai uji-t sebesar -3,8 yang diperoleh dalam penelitian ini melebihi ambang batas yang telah ditentukan, yang mengindikasikan adanya perbedaan yang signifikan antara kedua kelompok. Oleh karena itu, hipotesis alternatif diterima sedangkan hipotesis nol ditolak. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa kinerja akademik kelompok eksperimen lebih unggul daripada kelompok kontrol. Oleh karena itu, VCOP diyakini sebagai strategi alternatif untuk diterapkan di kelas menulis.

Kata Kunci: Menulis, Teks deskriptif, dan VCOP

Introduction

Acquiring writing skills poses a significant challenge for second-language (L2) learners, as it necessitates the development of various linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural competencies (Javadi-Safa, 2018). Moreover, mastery of writing is deemed crucial for students. According to Elola, I., & Oskoz (2017), students employ writing as a means of communication, allowing them to express ideas and emotions. Furthermore, Cornbleet, S., & Carter (2001) say that by creatively conveying their thoughts and feelings on paper, they effectively communicate in their most proficient manner and with specific intentions.

Jayanti (2019) mentions in order to enhance students' proficiency in teaching writing, educators should employ appropriate instructional strategies that foster students' motivation and engagement within the classroom setting. The reason for this is that pupils will find it easier to comprehend the core idea or theme of the text (Purnamasari, D., Hidayat, D. N., & Kurniawati, 2021). Furthermore, in ESL classroom, descriptive text is one of text in teaching writing. Bakar (2020) states that the acquisition of descriptive language is of significant value for pupils since it enables them to accurately depict individuals, locations, or objects in the English language. According to Pratiwi (2018), descriptive text provides a detailed portrayal of both animate and inanimate entities to the reader. Furthermore, descriptive writing refers to a form of written expression in the English language when the author

provides a detailed depiction or portrayal of an object (Purba, R., & Naibaho, 2021).

Based on the first observations made by the researchers at SMK Negeri 5 Langsa, it was seen that the students encountered challenges in comprehending the concept of descriptive text. In essence, pupils continue to experience uncertainty while commencing the introductory paragraph in writing exercises. Frequently, individuals make errors due to their limited vocabulary knowledge. Furthermore, the provision of learning strategies to teachers was lacking. Moreover, it has been observed that students lack enthusiasm in engaging with descriptive writing due to perceiving it as a monotonous task. Therefore, enhancing students' comprehension of written texts in the context of a writing class is a challenging task.

Based on the aforementioned background information, the writers exhibited a keen desire in undertaking a research endeavor regarding the use of vocabulary, connective, opener, punctuation (VCOP) strategy to improve students' writing skill. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to determine whether the use of the VCOP strategy can enhance students' capacity to write descriptive texts. In order to address the aforementioned issues, the authors propose a pedagogical approach for instructing writing. The utilization of VCOP is regarded as a pedagogical approach for instructing writing skills.

VCOP Strategy

Florence, F. S., & Sherine (2017) claim that the four core aims employed for teaching writing are encapsulated in the acronym VCOP. The acronym "V.C.O.P." represents the four key elements of effective writing, namely vocabulary, connectives, openers, and punctuation. The implementation of the VCOP technique has been shown to be beneficial in enhancing students' writing skills within the context of the teaching and learning process. Main features in VCOP proposed by Lambirth (2016) are as follow:

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1. Vocabulary

In the realm of language acquisition, it is of paramount importance for children to engage in thoughtful consideration regarding the selection of vocabulary and its subsequent impact on the recipient of their message. We advocate for the utilization of impactful vocabulary in written communication. The following are vocabulary terms that present a level of complexity suitable for children to incorporate into their linguistic repertoire. By employing these terms, children have the opportunity to enhance their nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs (Rustamov, T., Jumanazarov, X. M., Almatova, U., Mamaziyayev, Z. X., & Alibekova, 2022).

a. Noun - A lexical unit that designates an individual, location, or object.

b. Adjective – A word that function to elucidate a person, place or thing.

c. Verb - A word to elucidate action; what is happening in the sentence.

d. Adverb - A word to elucidate how the action is being done.

2. Connective

Connective is the name for any word that links clauses or sentences together (Unubi, 2016). There are two main groups of connectives: Conjunctions and Connecting Adverbs.

a. Conjunctions

Conjunctions are words that are used to link clauses within a sentence. There are two main kinds: Co-ordinating conjunctions – link two main clauses to make compound sentences. Example: and, but, or, so, for, nor, yet. 'I was hungry but I didn't seat anything'.

Subordinating conjunctions - go at the start of a subordinate clause. They work to link the subordinating clause to the main clause. Example: when, while, before, after, since, until, if, because, although, that. 'They were angry when they knew about it'. When they knew about it, they were angry'. (Commas are used when the subordinating clause is first).

b. Connecting adverbs

Connecting adverbs serve the purpose of linking ideas between two phrases, but still maintaining their own identities. Example: also, furthermore, moreover, however, nevertheless, on the other hand, besides, anyway, after all, for example, in other words, that is to say, first of all, finally, therefore, consequently, as a result, just then, meanwhile, later. Commas are often used to mark off connecting adverbs. 'I was hungry. However, I didn't eat anything'.

3. Openers

An opener is the first word or phrase used in a sentence. There exist numerous diverse methods for initiating sentences. In the early stages of children's writing development, it is common for sentences to predominantly commence with 'I, they, he/she, then' (Deveci, 2019).

4. Punctuation

The utilization of a diverse range of punctuation marks holds significance in enhancing the diversity and appeal of the students' written compositions. It offers students several instances that successfully demonstrate the usage of punctuation and exemplify how to employ them appropriately (Daffern, T., Mackenzie, N. M., & Hemmings, 2017). Steps of VCOP strategy as follows:

1. Vocabulary; the teacher provides guidance to the pupils to incorporate relevant vocabulary during class discussions..
2. Connective; the pupils are instructed to connect vocabulary in order to form a whole phrase.
3. Opener; the instructor endeavors to inspire students to generate a central concept during a writing exercise.
4. Punctuation; the teacher provides instructions to the students to include appropriate punctuation marks in every sentence.

Descriptive Text

Hariyadi, P., & Wennyta (2018) elaborate that a descriptive text is a form of written expression in the English language when the author provides a detailed portrayal of an object or entity. Within the context of this discourse, the subject matter encompasses both tangible and intangible entities, hence encompassing both concrete and abstract objects. The entity in question has the potential to manifest as a human being, an animal, or various other objects or entities.

Harmenita, R. Y., & Tiarina (2013) maintains that the primary objective of descriptive text is to engage the reader's imagination through the utilization of vivid depictions of individuals, subjects, or environments. They suggest several more reasons, including the provision of multiple perceptions, the facilitation of experiential understanding, the correction of reader misconceptions regarding the subject matter, the creation of novel value for existing concepts, and the persuasion of the reader towards a particular viewpoint. Descriptive prose serves the dual function of evoking emotions and captivating the reader, while also providing comprehensive information about a particular subject. In summary, the primary objective of descriptive language is to engage the reader's imagination, thereby providing both enjoyment and informational content.

In addition, the general structure of descriptive text comprises two main components: identification and description (Mendale, B. P., Komariah, E., & Fitriani, 2019). In identification part, the authors' purpose is to provide an introduction and identification of a particular participant, which may include individuals, objects, locations, animals, or events. Meanwhile, the description encompasses the participant's characteristics, physical attributes, personality traits, and behavioral patterns or features.

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Some Previous Researches

In order to bolster the theoretical foundations of the research, the authors present a selection of prior works that are relevant to the utilization of the VCOP technique in the context of writing. However, a significant shortcoming of the data is the difficulty in identifying related characteristics within the research. One of the earlier studies was conducted by researchers from the institution known as Florence, F. S., & Sherine (2017) who The researcher implemented the VCOP (Vocabulary, Connectives, Openers, Punctuation) approach within a diverse and densely populated English classroom setting in India. The study revealed a notable enhancement in the writing skills of the participants subsequent to the implementation of the Big Writing (VCOP) instructional approach, which was shown to be statistically significant.

The subsequent study is sourced from Blommaert & Rampton (2011). According to their working paper, the implementation of VCOP has been found to enhance students' ability to generate character descriptions that contribute to the development of more compelling narratives. Specifically, VCOP facilitates the utilization of a wider range of descriptive vocabulary, resulting in more sophisticated character descriptions and ultimately, improved storytelling. The prevailing perspective on writing quality in English a primary school in London seems to be widely adopted and unintentionally endorsed, along with other alternative methods, in policy documents and accompanying resources.

This study serves to bridge the gap in comparison to earlier research. The goal of this research is to improve students' proficiency in writing descriptive text in an Indonesian classroom where English is taught as a foreign language. To do this, pre-tests and post-tests were administered. Furthermore, the statistical methods employed to substantiate the conclusions were presented in a manner that diverged significantly from conventional approaches.

Methods

The present study employs an experimental research design, utilizing a quantitative approach to analyze the information, specifically relying on statistical data Savela (2018). The researchers employ a quasi-experimental design to determine the sample for this study. The quasi-experimental design is a research methodology that aims to maximize control within a given setting (Rogers, J., & Revesz, 2020).

This study employs a test to assess the proficiency of students' writing skills both before and after the implementation of the VCOP approach. The examination is segmented into a pre-test and a post-test. The material will be distributed among pupils in the tenth grade. The pre-test is conducted to assess the dependent variable before to the commencement of the therapy. The author employs a pre-test as a means of assessing the writing proficiency of students in relation to descriptive texts. Subsequently, the administration of this test takes place during the initial encounter prior to the implementation of the treatment. This assessment comprises two components, with the initial component including the composition of a descriptive paragraph that is grounded on the information that has been discussed. Furthermore, an additional task involves determining the significance of the intervention in the experimental group compared to the control group. This is accomplished by employing the VCOP technique to generate a descriptive text in the post-test phase. Hence, the allotted duration for the examination was 80 minutes, with 40 minutes designated for the pre-test session and an additional 40 minutes allocated for the post-test session. After that, the researchers employed the use of SPSS software in order to conduct data analysis.

The research was conducted at SMK Negeri 5 Langsa. In this study, the researchers employed random sampling as the method for selecting participants in order to establish the sample. The study involved a total of 64 participants, with 32 students assigned to the experimental class (referred to

as X3) and another 32 students assigned to the control class (referred to as X5).

Result

The statistical evidence, which was evaluated using SPSS, demonstrated a notable disparity between the writing pre-test and post-test scores of the students as been shown by the following tables.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

	N Statistic	Range Statistic	Min Statistic	Max Statistic	Sum Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Deviation Statistic	Variance Statistic
Pre-test	32	40	40	80	1830	57.19	2.210	12.504	156.351
Post-test	32	40	50	90	2220	69.38	2.287	12.936	167.339
Valid N (listwise)	32								

The results presented in table 1 indicate a statistically significant disparity in the scores of students descriptive writing pre-test (M=57.19, SD=12.5) and post-test (M=69.38, SD=12.9) following the implementation of the treatments. The assessment of normality is a necessary condition to ascertain whether the comparison test should be classified as parametric or nonparametric. The experiment was carried out using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (Berger, V. W., & Zhou, 2014).

Table 2. Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre-test	.183	32	.008	.905	32	.008
Post-test	.172	32	.017	.910	32	.012
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction						

The sig values. 0.008 and 0.017 indicate normally distributed data. Since the data is normally distributed then proceed with the Parametric test to show the difference.

Table 3. Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper
Score	Equal variances assumed	.092	.763	-3.832	62	.000	-12.188	3.180	-18.545	-5.830
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.832	61.929	.000	-12.188	3.180	-18.545	-5.830

The statistical significance, denoted by a p-value of 0.000 < 0.05, suggests that there exists a significant difference in the means of the pretest and posttest. The findings of this study indicate that the use of VCOP has the potential to enhance students' writing proficiency.

Upon conducting a paired sample t-test to examine the hypotheses, it was found that there existed a notable disparity between the scores of students' descriptive writing pre-test and post-test subsequent to the application of treatments. The statistical analysis yielded a t-value of -3.832 with a p-value of 0.000. This statistical evidence supports the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (Ha), as the p-value is below the significance level of 0.05. Consequently, it can be concluded that the implementation of the VCOP strategy has a significant positive impact on enhancing students' descriptive writing abilities.

The aforementioned findings indicate that the implementation of the VCOP technique in writing instruction has yielded positive outcomes in terms of enhancing students' writing abilities. The findings of the instructional

intervention revealed that following the implementation of the pedagogical approach by the instructor, the students exhibited a heightened level of attentiveness towards the subject matter being taught. The efficacy of the VCOP technique was demonstrated upon its presentation and integration into the instructional material. The students demonstrated individual motivation in their written responses according to the assigned topic in the context of their learning experience. Furthermore, the findings of this study demonstrated that students made advancements in their writing skills and the development of their thoughts.

The implementation of the VCOP technique in writing instruction can facilitate students in the process of generating and organizing their ideas during writing activities. The students engaged in extensive writing practice utilizing the VCOP technique. In essence, the utilization of VCOP has significant importance in facilitating pupils' writing endeavors. Motivated pupils are inclined to engage in detailed written expression in the English language. Furthermore, the implementation of the VCOP technique facilitates students in effectively composing texts of their preference. There is room for improvement in their idea and understanding when students engage in written English communication inside the classroom setting. This finding is in line with the previous studies and theories regarding VCOP strategy in writing class, which showed the significant difference between experimental and control classes in research conducted by Florence, F. S., & Sherine (2017).

Conclusion

Based on the examination of the data, the writers reached the conclusion that the VCOP technique was efficacious in enhancing students' writing abilities within the context of teaching and learning. The statistical analysis indicates that the post-test scores of the Experimental Group (EG) were higher than those of the Control Group (CG). The difference between the values 69.38 and 57.19 has been determined to be 12.19. The observed

discrepancy indicates that the intervention implemented had a beneficial effect on the academic achievements of the students. Additionally, the t-test statistic of -3.8 offered empirical support for the assertion. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that this finding does have certain limitations. Further exploration into the application of the VCOP strategy in many genres of English writing is necessary in order to enhance the students' understanding in ESL classroom environments.

Therefore, the utilization of the VCOP strategy by teachers as an instructional approach for writing instruction is recommended due to its demonstrated efficacy in enhancing students' writing ideas. The findings of this study indicate a notable enhancement in writing activities when the VCOP technique is implemented.

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