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The Use of Modeling Strategy in Improving Students' Descriptive Texts Comprehension

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to examine how well the modeling method improves EFL students' understanding of descriptive texts. A total of fifty-nine seventh-grade students from SMPN 2 Susoh were split into experimental and control groups for this quasi-experimental study. Traditional training was given to the control group, whereas the experimental group was taught a modeling method that included four stages: text modeling, deconstruction, co-construction, and self-construction. SPSS version 26, which featured independent samples t-tests, normality, homogeneity, and descriptive statistics, was utilized to assess the data. The experimental group improved by an average of 40.62 points on the post-test, whereas the control group improved by 39.71 points, according to the results. Statistical significance was achieved by the change (p =.042). As a result, the modeling technique has a somewhat positive effect on students' comprehension and composition of descriptive texts. These findings imply that the modeling strategy provides a methodical and successful teaching approach for junior high school English instruction, especially in the setting of EFL.

Keywords: Modeling Strategy; Descriptive Texts; EFL Pedagogy

Introduction

Descriptive text comprehension is an essential part of improving English language competency. The foundation of many academic and communicative tasks is the capacity to use exact and structured language to describe persons, locations, and objects. But even with its significance, a lot of pupils still have trouble comprehending and writing descriptive writings. The reason for this could be that teaching strategies that place a strong emphasis on memory and passive learning instead of involving students in socially and cognitively relevant reading activities.

The modeling technique, which is based on genre-based pedagogy, is one of the instructional strategies that have been introduced to address this. Through the

clear explanation of how a text is read, analyzed, and developed by teachers, modeling enables students to watch and absorb the processes involved. According to Shin (2017), modeling displays the structure, rationale, and choices made throughout reading and writing in addition to the finished work. Students are led to transition from reliance to independence in text composition through phases like text modeling, deconstruction, collaborative creation, and independent construction (Rose & Martin, 2012).

The modeling approach is theoretically consistent with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, specifically with regard to the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) idea. According to this theory, learning happens best when students engage in collaborative contact with more experienced individuals who can scaffold their learning. As a type of scaffolding, modeling assists students in developing comprehension through supervised practice prior to advancing to autonomous performance. This theoretical foundation frames modeling as a developmental instrument for language acquisition rather than just a method.

Although previous research has demonstrated the benefits of modeling for improving students' reading and writing skills in EFL contexts (Ghadamgahi & Ghafournia, 2023), there is a lack of empirical research focusing specifically on descriptive texts, especially in the Indonesian context. Most previous research has focused on narrative or procedural texts, or emphasized writing rather than reading comprehension. Most of this Indonesian research has focused on general writing outcomes without specifically testing the four stages of modeling as an explicit intervention framework. For example, Cholifah et al. (2022) conducted a local qualitative study focusing on a teacher's perception regarding the implementation of genre-based writing instruction in Indonesian senior high schools. However, it did not quantitatively assess students' comprehension or isolate modeling strategies as a variable, leaving a gap in terms of measurable instructional impact particularly in descriptive texts.

This gap is especially significant because descriptive texts are often used in school assessments and are crucial for students' academic achievement. Lacking clear and systematic teaching strategies, students may persist in struggling to organize and express their ideas descriptively. Moreover, combining modeling strategies with curriculum-based objectives provides an opportunity for scalable classroom interventions.

Based on this rationale, this research seeks to examine how effective modeling strategies are in enhancing students' understanding of descriptive texts. Therefore, the research is guided by the following question: "Does the use of modeling strategy improve students' comprehension of descriptive texts?" This study contributes to the literature by offering empirical evidence from an Indonesian junior high school context and by testing the modeling strategy through a quasi-experimental design. The results are expected to provide both theoretical insight and practical implications for improving EFL pedagogy, particularly in under-researched regional contexts such as Aceh Barat Daya.

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Method

This study employed a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest control group design with a quantitative approach. The participants consisted of 59 seventh-grade students at SMPN 2 Susoh, divided into two classes: VII.1 (experimental group, n=31) and VII.2 (control group, n=28). The selection was based on existing class assignments, not random sampling.

The modeling strategy was implemented over three sessions, following the genre-based pedagogy model by Callaghan & Rothery (1988) and Rose & Martin (2012). The four instructional stages were:

1. Modeling: Teacher introduced and analyzed a sample descriptive text.
2. Deconstruction: Students collaboratively examined text structure and language features.
3. Joint Construction: Teacher and students co-wrote a descriptive text through guided discussion.
4. Independent Construction: Students individually wrote descriptive texts and conducted peer reviews.

To ensure treatment fidelity, a teaching guide and observation checklist were used during implementation. The control group received instruction through conventional grammar-based methods, emphasizing text translation and vocabulary memorization without modeling.

The comprehension test consisted of 20 multiple-choice items and 5 short-answer questions, validated by two subject experts. Content validity was measured using Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) method, with all items scoring above 0.8. Reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha, yielding $\alpha = 0.81$, indicating high internal consistency. Ethical clearance was obtained from the school board, and informed consent was collected from students and guardians.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The following table presents the pre-test and post-test descriptive statistics of the two groups:

Table 4.1 The Descriptive Statistics of the Data Descriptive Statistics

Group	Test	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Experime	pre-test (EC)	31	65	5	70	30.19	21.018
ntal	post-test (EC)	31	80	20	100	70.81	19.240
Control	pre-test (CC)	28	56	5	61	24.04	14.794
	post-test (CC)	28	30	50	80	63.75	11.273

The experimental group demonstrated a substantial improvement in their post-test scores (M = 70.81, SD = 19.24), compared to the control group (M = 63.75, SD = 11.27). This improvement reflects the effectiveness of modeling in enhancing

students' comprehension.

Normality and Homogeneity Test

The results of the Shapiro-Wilk normality test show that all data have a significance value>0.05, so it can be concluded that the data is normally distributed. The results of the Levene's Test homogeneity test gave a significance value of 0.287 (>0.05), meaning that the data between groups were homogeneous.

Inferential Analysis

After the assumptions of normality and homogeneity were met, an inferential analysis was conducted using an Independent Samples t-Test to determine whether there was a significant difference between the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups. The analysis revealed a t-value of 1.695 with 57 degrees of freedom, and a significance level (p-value) of 0.042, which is below the threshold of 0.05. This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups after the intervention. On average, the experimental group's post-test score was 7.06 points higher than that of the control group.

Furthermore, the 95% confidence interval (CI) for the mean difference ranged from -1.28 to 15.39. Although the lower bound suggests a slight possibility of a negative difference, most of the interval lies above zero, reinforcing the conclusion that the modeling strategy had a positive effect on students' comprehension of descriptive texts. Therefore, these findings provide empirical evidence that the use of a modeling strategy significantly enhances students' understanding of descriptive texts compared to conventional instruction.

Effect Size

The practical effect is measured using Cohen's d:

$$d = \frac{70.81 - 63.75}{\sqrt{\frac{(19.24)^2 + (11.27)^2}{2}}} = 0.43$$

This value shows a moderate effect based on Cohen's classification, indicating that the modeling strategy has a significant impact on improving student understanding.

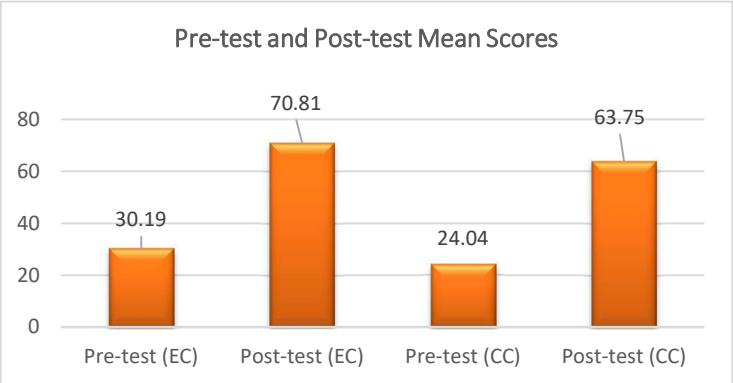

Figure 1. Pre-Test And Post Test Mean Score

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Discussion

The study's findings demonstrate that the modeling approach greatly improved students' comprehension and production of descriptive texts. The experimental group's mean score significantly improved from 30.19 in the pre-test to 70.81 in the post-test, surpassing the improvements shown in the control group. These results are in line with earlier studies showing how modeling might improve students' cognitive processes (Shin, 2017). The findings theoretically support Vygotsky's idea of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which holds that scaffolding through supervised contact maximizes learning. This scaffold was supplied by the modeling approach, especially through its phases of demonstration, co-construction, and autonomous practice, which assisted students in internalizing writing procedures as well as linguistic structures. Furthermore, by clearly defining the linguistic elements and functional components of descriptive texts, genre-based instruction strengthens students' comprehension of text kinds.

Even with these favorable results, other theories should be taken into account. Increased student motivation, teacher zeal, or the novelty of the teaching method itself may all have contributed to the performance improvement that was seen. Peer dynamics, student-teacher interaction, and past exposure to descriptive texts were among the classroom variables that were not entirely controlled and might have influenced the outcomes. Therefore, even if the modeling approach seems to be working, future research should focus on these possible confounding factors.

This study is not without limitations. The relatively small sample size 59 students from two classes may restrict the statistical generalizability of the findings. The quasi-experimental design, while practical in a school context, lacks random assignment and may introduce selection bias. Furthermore, since the study was conducted in a single junior high school in Aceh Barat Daya, the findings may not fully apply to broader educational settings or diverse student populations. The intervention was also short in duration limited to three classroom sessions raising questions about the long-term sustainability of the effects. Additionally, the test instrument focused mainly on immediate comprehension and writing output, without assessing deeper or more durable learning outcomes such as retention, transfer, or learner autonomy.

A number of useful conclusions can be made to encourage wider deployment. The cognitive processes involved in reading and writing must be explained by educators in addition to providing exemplar texts. "What features describe the object?" or "Why is this adjective used here?" are two examples of guided questions that teachers may ask aloud while students are studying a descriptive paragraph. The whole modeling cycle may be difficult to implement, though, particularly in classes with a lot of students, little time, or inadequate collaborative teaching skills. Additionally, because they are unfamiliar with or lack confidence, students may initially find joint creation or peer-review projects difficult.

One important tool for getting around these challenges is technology. Teachers

can record video demos to model text analysis and writing approaches, or they can utilize Google Docs to produce texts collaboratively. For students that require additional time, these resources might be made available and utilized again in different classrooms. Also, programs such as Padlet or Flipgrid can help students participate in multimodal modeling settings.

The results have ramifications for teacher preparation and curriculum as well. It is recommended that syllabus documents incorporate modeling methodologies, particularly in writing courses that involve procedural, narrative, and descriptive genres. Through this integration, phases of explicit modeling, guided practice, and independent performance would all be included in the instructional period. Repeated modeling cycles should be planned over a semester to provide skill reinforcement for long-term effects. Workshops on genre-based instruction and the capacity to create and modify modeling assignments to meet the requirements of students and curriculum objectives should be included in teacher preparation programs.

In summary, although the modeling technique worked well in this study, its effects might be enhanced by paying close attention to theoretical integration, recognizing its limitations more clearly, and developing more practical plans for long-term classroom implementation.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to find out whether a modelling strategy can improve descriptive text writing ability based on data analysis, which indicated to support previous findings that students' descriptive text writing ability is significantly improved by modeling techniques. The experimental class's students showed improved comprehension, better organization, and more writing confidence after being educated through the modeling phases of reading, analyzing, outlining, and practicing. The control group, on the other hand, which was taught conventionally, improved less. The results demonstrate that, in comparison to traditional approaches, modelling is structured and interactive features offer learners more effective scaffolding. This reaffirms the importance of using modeling techniques in language training, especially when trying to improve students' writing proficiency.

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