

Buzz Group Technique to Increase Writing Skill at EFL Students of Junior High School in Indonesia

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Abstract

This research aimed to find out whether there was a significant difference of writing skill achievement between EFL students who were taught using Buzz Group technique and those who were taught using a conventional method by expecting the Buzz Group technique improved EFL students' writing skill achievement at SMP Negeri 7 Baubau, Southeast Sulawesi. Design of this research was a quasi-experimental in which there were 22 students in both control and experimental groups. The findings of this research obtained: 1) the mean score of EFL students' writing skill at pretest in experimental class was 51.09 in low category and the mean score of posttest was 72.18 in high category; 2) the mean score of EFL students' writing skill at pretest in control class was 49.82 in low category and the mean score of posttest was 56.36 in moderate category; 3) the score of Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) from hypothesis test was 0.000 in which it was less than 0.05. Therefore, this research concluded that there was a significant difference between of writing skill achievement between EFL students who were taught using Buzz Group technique and those who were taught using the conventional method at SMP Negeri 7 Baubau. In addition, the use of Buzz Group technique is better than the conventional method to improve EFL students' writing skill achievement.

Keywords

Buzz Group Technique; Writing Skill Achievement



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INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of four parts of English skill that must be mastered by the English learners. It is considered as the most difficult skill of English since it combines thoughts, ideas, opinions, experiences, events, and histories of a writer in the form of text. Writing is a process and that we write is often heavily influenced by

constraints of genres, then these elements have to be presented in learning activities (Harmer, 2004). Writing integrates many aspects of language such as vocabulary mastery, words-arrangement, grammar proficiency, and constructing a paragraph. Writing requires mastery not only of grammatical or rhetorical devices but also

of conceptual and judgmental elements (Heaton, 1990).

Writing is one activity that the students do most in their study. Through writing assignments, the students can express their ideas, respond to the other ideas, tell stories, convey information, and they are expected to be able to compose well-organized writing. Writing skills can also be the ticket to better college grades and greater academic achievement. On the other hand, there are many students find difficulty when they are asked to write because they do not know how to start and what topic they should choose. Besides, uninteresting topic and unsuitable teaching techniques can influence students' interest in writing English.

To figure out the problem above, English teachers have to be more creative in choosing the materials and teaching methods which can make the writing class more interesting, exciting, and enjoyable. It can be done by choosing an appropriate material and technique that students like based on students' level and background of knowledge. To boost the students' writing skill, the students have to be creative, create the environment that will allow the creativity of the students, know ourselves deeply, intimately or patiently with the

process of writing, free ourselves from outcome and enjoy the process, have compassion, no doubt, no fear, do not say 'I cannot', learn all the time and do the experiment, and be unique (Ali, 2009). Some points that he proposed shows that the students have to be interested and enjoy the writing process to improve the students writing ability.

As a foreign language in Indonesia, English is taught as a compulsory subject in junior high school and senior high school. Related to this research, one of school that is observed as a research site is SMP Negeri 7 Baubau. This school is one of junior high schools in Baubau whose students always join English competition held by National Education Department or students' organization from some universities in Baubau. But the problems in learning English still arise, especially in writing a narrative text.

In English learning process, the teacher taught the students by using the lecture method. It means that the teacher explains the students about the materials and then they are asked to respond to the questions. By this method, most of the students tell that writing is difficult for them and the implication is they cannot write a good text. The first problem is the students do

not have the motivation to study English. In their minds, English is a difficult subject. They find it difficult to give their opinion and point of view. Moreover, they have problem with a lack of vocabulary, poor grammar and unable to organize and develop their ideas. Therefore, they find many difficulties to produce good English writing. The second problem is teaching method applied by the teacher. To enable students to master the writing skills, the English teachers should provide material that is appropriate with the curriculum and find suitable methods or technique in teaching and learning process.

Considering those problems, the researcher proposes a method which is believed to solve students' English problem. It is Buzz Group technique. The Buzz Group is a collaborative method that promotes small-group interactions among learners. By using Buzz Group technique, it helps students to explore their imagination, thoughts, and opinions about a controversial topic; or to gather potential solutions to a problem in learning narrative writing (Roestiyah, 2008). There are many pieces of research find that Buzz Group is able to improve students' reading comprehension, but by considering the theory above, this method is also

reasonable to solve writing problem. There are eight advantages of Buzz Group and one of them is all of four skills, reading, writing, listening, and speaking, are integrated (Haines, 1989).

Therefore, this research finds out whether there is a significant difference of writing ability at EFL students in junior high school between those who are taught by using Buzz Group technique and those who are not by expecting that the EFL students who are taught by using Buzz Group technique get better writing ability than another class.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Teaching Writing

It is confessed that teaching writing is difficult and complex. Therefore, it needs creative efforts from the lecturer to bring the writing class to be enjoyable. Writing skills can develop rapidly when students' concerns and interests are acknowledged when they are given numerous opportunities to write, and when they are encouraged to become participants in a community of writers. Teachers should investigate their own practices, and the effect of those practices on their students, and has found it to be an excellent way of bridging the gap between theory and

practice. It means that in writing class, the lecturers must allow the students to write as they have in their mind in order to produce creative writing. The lecturers must also evaluate their teaching in order to find out the weak points that must be corrected.

Teaching writing has some pedagogic purposes (Byrne, 1992):

- a. The introduction and practice of some forms of writing enable us to provide for different learning styles and needs. Some learners feel more secure if they are allowed to write in the language, especially for those who do not learn easily through oral practice.
- b. Written words serve to provide the learners with some tangible evidence that they are making progress in the language. It is not likely to be a true index of their attainment, but it satisfies a psychological need.
- c. Exposure to the foreign language through more than one medium, especially if skills are properly integrated, appears to be more effective than relying on a single medium alone.
- d. Writing provides variety in classroom activities, serving as a break from oral work and therefore a quieter and

more relaxed time for both students and teachers.

- e. Writing is often needed for formal and informal testing. In some cases, a written may even be appropriate, for example making notes while listening.

Another expert says that teaching

writing includes (Harmer, 1997):

- a. Reinforcement. In this activity, each student acquires language in a purely oral way and gives benefit greatly from seeing the language written down. Students often find it useful to write sentences using new language shortly after they have studied it.
- b. Language development. It means the actual process of writing rather like process activity construct properly written texts is all part of the on-going learning experience.
- c. Learning style. Some students are fantastically quick at picking up the language just by looking and listening. It can also be a quiet activity instead of the rush and bother of interpersonal face to face communication
- d. Writing as a skill. That is a basic language skill, just as important as speaking, listening, and reading. Students need to know how to write letters, to put written reports, written

essays, how to reply advertisement, and increasingly how to write using electronic media.

The explanations above show that even though the writing is a difficult skill to teach or learn, but students will acquire new experience through the process of writing. It is because writing will provide a different learning style than other language skills. Through writing, students are able to share their opinion, idea or daily activity with other people.

Concept of Buzz Group

Buzz Group can be categorized as discussion activities because it asks the learners to work in small groups instead of by the whole class. It facilitates the learners to discuss the same issues or different issues that the teacher assigns. Buzz Group is helpful to give learners enough information about what they will be talking about and giving them enough time to think about what they want to say. In other words, it is a good idea to put the learners into groups so that they can get more speaking practice (Lindsay & Knight, 2006). If the learners only speak to the teacher spontaneously, they will be more silent because they sometimes have no idea to respond to the teacher.

Furthermore, their opportunities for practicing are limited.

Advantages of Buzz Group in Writing Activity

There are some advantages to using Buzz Group teaching writing (Larasanti & Marlina, 2019):

- a. The students are able to generate ideas before starting to write.

Buzz Group technique allows the students to find much information by sharing experiences and opinions as a reaction to the issue. In addition, when the bigger discussion happens, developing ideas can be done by the students. Thus, the students will not get confused anymore what to write. They have gathered ideas and they just need to compile those to be an analytical exposition text.

- b. The students are energized in expressing their thoughts

Buzz Group encourages the students to talk in the discussion in which happens in collecting information and associating stage. Sometimes, it is more likely for the students to speak in private before speaking to the whole students.

- c. The students are able to create a better writing text.

The students can create better writing after using Buzz Group. When they have finished two discussions, they can get various best ideas to be developed into the analytical exposition text. Moreover, the others' assistances help them to improve their writing such as form group review and the teacher's review. As a result, their quality of writing becomes better after having a correction from the others.

- d. It creates a good interaction among the students

By using the Buzz Group technique, the students become participate actively in the learning process. Teaching writing using Buzz Group technique produces a good interaction among the members. Since it is a group work, all of the students are forced to share the views and give feedback to others. They have to listen and react what someone has to say about the topic.

- e. The class is dominated by the students

The students will work together and exchange their ideas on a writing topic. They might feel about good solidarity which becomes a source of

encouragement for the students in the learning process. As a result, the teacher will not fully take the success of the responsibility of the learning anymore even through buzz group the students put themselves as a center in the learning process.

The General Procedures of Buzz Groups Technique

When the teachers want to apply Buzz Group, they should know the steps or the procedure to conduct it. Here are the procedures for applying Buzz Group (Brewer, 1997):

- a. Introducing the topic.

The teacher tells the students about the way of the discussion and the information of Buzz Group and the limitation as well, for instance, the duration, the groups, the topic, the procedure, and the purpose as well.

- b. Split the students into some groups.

If the number of the students are big, the members of each group can be 4 to 6 or the smaller one around 2-4 students. Here, the teacher should divide the groups which contain varying intelligence.

- c. The teacher asks the students to choose a leader/spokesperson.

Each group will point a leader who makes certain all members get acquainted each other.

- d. The students start a 15-20 minutes discussion.

The time for having a discussion can be 15 to 20 minutes. It depends on the complexity of the problem and the number of people in each group. Furthermore, while they are discussing, the teacher will check group by group to keep them staying on the track.

- e. Discuss the result of discussion in a large group

One member or a leader of a group will present their result in a class discussion and the teacher will summarize the students' discussion.

The role of teachers in Buzz Group activity can not be ignored whether in setting up the activity or in overseeing the learners when they are in progress. These are some of the things teachers must do in conducting Buzz Group:

- a. Select the questions or issues carefully. The teachers should choose the issues or task that the learners have to do. They also have to determine whether they will use visual materials like the picture to support the task or not to

the learners. Issues or questions which are discussed can be the newest issues, are faced by Indonesia or a certain topic which relates to the sourcebook such as explaining the electronic usage, describing the Indonesian Island and so on.

- b. Work out the instructions for Buzz Group carefully. Presenting the Buzz Group activity to the learners will be a major factor in its success. The teachers should keep instructions simple, and if necessary they are able to use the mother tongue. Hence, the activity will run well in its process.
- c. Present the activity to the class clearly. The use of mother tongue in this stage is permitted, but the teacher must try to use English as much as possible because both explaining and evaluating activities is a very real use of language in a classroom situation. Plenty of examples should be given before the students speaking activity is going on.
- d. Monitor the students' performance. While the Buzz Group activity is in progress, the teacher's main task is to move around the class and to listen indiscreetly in order to find out how the learners are getting on. The

teacher is not suggested to correct mistakes of language during a group activity but makes a note of them as the basis of feedback. In Buzz Group activity, the learners should also be told that the teacher is available for consultation if they need help, either to clarify instructions or to help with the language.

- e. Provide feedback. A major kind of feedback will be concerned with language. If, during the teacher's monitoring of the activity, the teacher has detected mistakes, and may choose to point these out to the group afterward or to the whole class.
- f. Keep a record. Keeping a record of Buzz Group activity that the teacher has done is so important, together with any comments on the learners' performance. These are done to know the progress of students speaking ability in every meeting.

As the researcher's explanations above, the researcher plans that the researcher will use the fourth procedures and the sixth tasks of the teacher when the researcher conducts the research. Because in this research the researcher uses Buzz Group activity to teach speaking to know

the effect of Buzz Group in teaching speaking.

To make the reader easy to understand the procedure of Buzz Groups technique, the point of the procedure is explained below (Lumsden, Lumsden, & Wiethoff, 2009).

- a. Divide the audience quickly by having people in alternating rows turn around so that each set of three forms a group with the three immediately behind or in front.
- b. Give each group a card with a question to consider and the format for reporting their ideas.
- c. Allow the groups to discuss the topic for 6 minutes.
- d. Ask a member of each group to reports its major findings very briefly or to write them on a visual for display.

Buzz Group Technique to Teach Writing Skill

In the learning process, the teacher cannot force students to follow what he/she wants, he/she has to consider everything to the success of the teaching and learning process. There are many points in writing class at which students will need to talk for example, during writing process; peer editing shared

brainstorming or small group instruction. Collaboration is a useful skill to foster as well as a useful teaching technique but left to its own devices it can encourage off-task behavior. Because children enjoy experimenting with writing and putting their ideas down on paper.

In this research, the researcher uses the Buzz Group technique as a method to teach writing skill. There are some preparations before applying it.

- a. Before coming to the class, the teacher has to decide what will be discussed first by the Buzz Group.
- b. Make one or more directions tend to be conceptual, not factual, and it will stimulate discussing an unlimited argument.
- c. Try to respond to the questions given by students from the directions by you, to make sure that the questions can dig students various responses.
- d. Choose the best way to convey directions questions, such as using worksheet, transparency screen, or whiteboard.

METHOD

This research used a quantitative approach. Quantitative research is the collection and analysis of numerical data to

describe, explain, predict, or control phenomena of interest (Gay, Mills, & Airaisan, 2012). The experimental method was a method used in this research. Experimental researches test an idea (or practice of procedure) to determine its effect on an outcome (Creswell, 2012). It is the most powerful quantitative research method for establishing a cause-and-effect relationship between two or more variables (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Furthermore, of some kinds of the experimental method, this research applied a quasi-experimental design of nonequivalent control-group design. A quasi-experimental method is an experimental research design in which the researcher cannot assign participants randomly to conditions and/or manipulate the independent variable; instead, comparisons are made between groups that already exist or within a single group before and after a quasi-experimental treatment has occurred (Tavakoli, 2012). In nonequivalent control-group design, research participants are not randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups, and both groups take a pretest and a posttest (Gall et al., 2007). An experimental group is a group which receives the experimental treatment and

control group is a group of participants who receives no treatment or an alternate treatment to that given to the experimental group. In this research, the experimental group received a Buzz Group technique in learning writing skill as the experimental treatment, while in the control group, it received a conventional method.

The place of this research was carried out at SMP Negeri 7 Baubau which was located in Baubau town, Southeast Sulawesi province. The population of this research was the grade eight students which consisted of 90 students divided into four classes. There were 22 to 23 students for each class. Cluster sampling was the techniques the researchers used to select the sample. Cluster samples are widely used in small scale research. In a cluster sample the parameters of the wider population are often drawn very sharply; a researcher, therefore, would have to comment on the generalization of the findings. By cluster sampling, the researcher can select a specific number of schools and test all the students in those selected schools, i.e. a geographically close cluster are sampled (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Therefore, this research took two classes in which the experimental

group was class VIII. A and the control group was class VIII.C. Both classes consisted of 22 students each.

To obtain the research data, an instrument in this research was a test, in which the test was administered into two parts; those were pretest and posttest. For analyzing the data, descriptive and inferential statistics were applied. The descriptive statistics were applied to find out the students' writing skill both in the pretest and in posttest for either experimental or control group, which consist of mean, minimum score and maximum score from the test. While to determine students' writing skill achievement, the following formula from is used (Sudidjono, 2013):

$$\text{Final score} = \frac{\text{raw score}}{\text{Ideal maximum score}} \times 100$$

The score obtained from the formula above are consulted to the following table 1.

Table 1. Category of Writing Skill Achievement

No	Scoring Range	Criteria
1	86-100	Very High
2	71-85	High
3	56-70	Moderate
4	≤ 55	Low

Before doing the inferential statistics, the researcher employed a prerequisite analysis; those were normality and homogeneity test to determine whether the inferential statistics would use parametric or nonparametric statistics.

The inferential statistics were applied to find out whether there was a significant difference in writing skill for both experimental and control class. In the inferential statistics, the Independent Sample Test was used to test the hypothesis. Criteria of rejecting or accepting the hypothesis with significant value of 0.05 were:

- a. If the value of Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) was less than α (0.05), it meant there was a significant difference of students' writing skill of those who were taught through Buzz Group technique and those who were taught through conventional method at grade eight of SMP Negeri 7 Baubau.
- b. If the value of Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) was greater than α (0.05), it meant there was not any significant difference of students' writing skill of those who were taught by Buzz Group technique and those who were taught through conventional method at grade eight of SMP Negeri 7 Baubau.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The finding of this research is divided into some parts; those are the results of students' writing skill both in the experimental and control group for pretests and posttests, the prerequisite analysis which consisted of the results of normality and homogeneity test, and the hypothesis test.

Test Results in Experimental Group

In this group, there are 22 students as the research sample. Before applying the treatment for this group, the pretest is first administered to the students to find out their writing skill.

Table 2. Result of Pretest

No	Score	Frequency	Percentage
1	40	6	27.3
2	48	6	27.3
3	52	2	9.1
4	56	3	13.6
5	60	1	4.5
6	64	2	9.1
7	68	2	9.1
Total		22	100

Based on table 2 above, it can be seen that the minimum score is 40 which is obtained by 6 students or 27.3% out of 100% student and the maximum score is 68 which is obtained by 2 students or 9.1% out of 100% students. Besides, from the analysis of the data, the mean score of students' writing skill is 51.09. After consulting to the achievement category, the students' writing skill is in a low category.

Referring to the result above, the researcher prepares the lesson plan for six meetings using Buzz Group technique to improve the students' writing skill. At the seventh meeting, the posttest is administered to the students.

Table 3. Result of Posttest

No	Score	Frequency	Percentage
1	60	1	4.5
2	68	9	41.0
3	76	11	50.0
4	80	1	4.5
Total		22	100

Table 3 above explains that the minimum score is 60 which is obtained by 1 student or 4.5% out of 100% student and the maximum score is 80 which is obtained by 1 student or 4.5% out of 100% student. Besides, from the analysis of the data, the mean score of students' writing skill is 72.18. After consulting to the achievement

category, the students' writing skill is improving to be in the high category.

Test Results in Control Group

In this group, there are also 22 students as the research sample. Same as the experimental group, the pretest is first administered to the students to find out their writing skill before the researcher teach them using a conventional method.

Table 4. Result of Pretest

No	Score	Frequency	Percentage
1	40	7	31.8
2	48	6	27.3
3	52	2	9.1
4	56	3	13.6
5	60	1	4.5
6	64	2	9.1
7	68	1	4.5
Total		22	100

It can be seen in table 4 above that the minimum score is 40 which is obtained by 7 students or 31.8% out of 100% student and the maximum score is 68 which is obtained by 1 student or 4.5% out of 100% student. Besides, from the analysis of the data, the mean score of students' writing skill is 49.82. After consulting to the achievement category, the students' writing skill is in a low category.

As a comparison with the experimental group, a conventional method is used to teach writing at the control group for six

meetings. When it is done, a posttest is administered to find out the students' writing skill. Its result is presented below.

Table 5. Result of Posttest

No	Score	Frequency	Percentage
1	48	7	31.8
2	52	6	27.3
3	56	2	9.1
4	64	1	4.5
5	68	5	22.7
6	76	1	4.5
Total		22	100

Table 5 above indicates that the minimum score is 48 which is obtained by 7 students or 31.8% out of 100% student and the maximum score is 76 which is obtained by 1 student or 4.5% out of 100% student. Besides, from the analysis of the data, the mean score of students' writing skill is 56.36. After consulting to the achievement category, the students' writing skill is in the moderate category.

Prerequisite Analysis

Before testing the hypothesis, the prerequisite analysis is done. The purpose of this analysis is to know whether the data is normally distributed and homogeneous. It is applied to define whether the hypothesis will be analyzed using parametric or nonparametric statistics. Because the data is less than 50, then the

kind of normality test is used Shapiro-Wilk test.

Table 6. Result of Normality Test

No	Item	df	Sig.
1	Pretest	44	.000
2	Posttest	44	.000

To analyze the result of the normality test, the hypothesis of the test says that if the value of sig. is greater than 0.05, the data is normal. Since the values of sig. in the table above are less than 0.05, it means they are not normally distributed.

Another test applied before doing the hypothesis test is a homogeneity test. It is used to find out whether the data is homogeneous. If the value of sig. is greater than 0.05, it means the data are homogeneous.

Table 7. Result of Normality Test

No	Item	df1	df2	Sig.
1	Pretest	1	42	.743
2	Posttest	1	42	.003

The result in the table above indicates that the data in pretest are homogeneous, but it is not homogeneous in the posttest. Of the result of normality and homogeneity test, it is used Mann-Whitney U test to test the hypothesis

Hypothesis Test

Since the data are not normally distributed and not homogeneous, the hypothesis test is done using the Mann-Whitney U test. The result of the hypothesis test finds that the value of Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.000. Since it is less than 0.05, it means the hypothesis is accepted.

Discussion

It is known that in data findings, the students' writing skill achievement in pretest in the experimental group is 51.09 which is in the low category and it is 49.82 in control group which is also in low category. This result can be caused by some problems the students experience during the learning process. It is in line with research (Aduwa-Ogiegbaen & Iyamu, 2006) which examine the factors responsible for the poor quality of the teaching of English as a second language in public secondary schools across the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. Of three variables they provide in the research questionnaire, those are (1) frequency of the use of instructional media, (2) frequency of the use of instructional techniques, and (3) the school learning environment, their research reveals that English language teachers do not

frequently use modern instructional technologies and variety of teaching techniques in their English language lessons.

This application of the Buzz Group technique is then carried out to improve the students' writing skill achievement. This method is applied for the experimental group, while a conventional method is applied for the control group. The result of the posttest indicates that both groups have an improvement in their writing skill achievement. In the experimental group, the mean score of posttest is 72.18 which is in the high category. It means there is an improvement of 21.09 point from pretest to posttest from low category to be high category. For the posttest result in control group, the mean score is 53.36. It means there is also an improvement of 6.55 point from pretest to posttest from low category to be moderate category. The hypothesis test finds that the value of Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.000 which is less than 0.05. Of that result, this research obtains a result that the hypothesis is accepted.

By comparing the mean score of posttest both in the experimental group and control group, it is known that the experimental group which is the Buzz

Group technique is carried out has a higher score than the control group which uses the conventional method. Buzz group is an effective technique to gather information and ideas in a short time (Barkley, Cross, & Major, 2012), very useful to help the students in finding ideas at the beginning of writing activity, makes the students actively participate in the learning process and build a positive interaction among the students, even the students will be more confident to express their points of view through the discussion (Larasanti & Marlina, 2019), and allows everyone's ideas to be expressed (Pangaribuan & Manik, 2018).

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the research, this research concludes that there is a significant difference in writing skill between EFL students who are taught using Buzz Group technique and those who are taught using the conventional method. It is because of the value of Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.000 in which it is less than 0.05. Considering the improvement of students' mean score, it can be drawn a conclusion that the use of Buzz Group technique is better than the conventional method, since the EFL students' writing skill achievement

which is taught using Buzz Group technique is in high category, while the class which is taught using conventional method has moderate writing skill achievement.

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