

## Using Group Investigation (GI) Strategy to Improve Students' Writing Skill

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### ABSTRACT

#### Keywords:

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Writing Skill

The aim of this research is to find out the effectiveness of Group Investigation Strategy in improving students' writing skill. This study is experimental and was conducted in Bangka, Bangka Belitung province. 50 students from two classes of middle school were taken as the sample. By using Paired Sample t-test and Independent Sample t-test, the result showed that the students who learned by using Group Investigation Strategy got higher score than those who were not. The result of independent sample t-test stated that t-obtained (0.420) was lower than critical value of t-table (2.01) and the significant (2-tailed) was 0.670, higher than computation with significant level 0.005. In other words, there was no significant difference between the students who were taught by using Group Investigation Strategy and the students who were taught without using Group Investigation Strategy.



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### Introduction

As one of the four language skills of English, writing is not easy to be mastered, because it is considered the most difficult skill among other skills to be mastered for second language learner, such as reading, speaking, and listening (Richards & Schmidt, 2013). Furthermore, writing skill is complex, detailed and sometimes difficult for students. Therefore, it is important to consider the characteristic of effective instruction of writing because writing is not only about writing some words in the paper, but also needs many aspects to use (Brown-Chidsey, Bronaugh, & McGraw, 2009). According to Gebhard, writing involves many aspects of language such as word choice, use of appropriate grammar, syntax (word order), mechanics, and organization of ideas into coherent and cohesive form and focuses on audience and purpose (Gebhard, 2006). In other words, in writing there are many elements.

Furthermore, writing is presented in the form of text types, it is known as genres. The texts included in junior high school curriculum are descriptive, narrative, procedure, and recount. Based on the curriculum and observation in a public high school in West Bangka, recount text is the text learned by the eighth-grade students of junior high school. Recount text can be defined as a text to reflect on an incident that happened in the past through a text. According to Gerot and Wignell, recounting experience for informing or entertaining as the purpose is known as recount text. The purpose of a recount text is to provide information and tell about events that have occurred (Linda & Peter, 1995). So, recount text is retelling an event in the past with a purpose to entertain or inform the readers.

In the preliminary research in the public junior high school, the English teacher and the students were interviewed. According to the teacher, half of the students from each class could not write recount text well, and the students also conveyed the same statement. They said that writing recount text was difficult to do. There were some factors that made recount text became difficult to be mastered. First, students' lack

of vocabulary. The students were poor in vocabulary in formulating and making sentences, and as the result, they could not convey their ideas and opinions well. Second, students could not construct the main idea and supporting sentences. Third, the students could not organize their writing into a good text. Based on the students' scores of the English test from the teacher, the writing test scores were the smallest score compared to the other skills. The average score for class A was 49,90, for class B was 55,72 and for class C was 53,90. Furthermore, they also had difficulties in grammatical aspect. Grammatical errors are usually found in students' writing, as suggested in a study by Husnayaini (Husnayaini, Rizki, & Savitri, 2021).

In addition, the students also could not rewrite a text based on what happened in the past because they do not have ideas. So, a strategy was applied to help students to remember the events and can construct some ideas. If the students can remember and construct the ideas, they can write the text well.

There are many strategies that can be used in the class to improve writing skill, but judging this case, Group Investigation Strategy was decided to be used. Group Investigation Strategy is known as one of many strategies that are effective to encourage and engage students to working together in learning writing text especially recount text.

Group Investigation Strategy is a strategy that uses a small group to communicate. This strategy can be used to generate ideas in writing. In addition, in Group Investigation Strategy there are students form interest groups within which to plan and implement an investigation, and synthesize the findings into a group presentation for the class (Zingaro, 2008). This strategy involved students in planning both topics for study and ways to continue their investigation. Students select the topics based on topics that given by the teacher, then subject can be discussed by the students in their own groups to make a draft, then they arranged as composition text.

Group Investigation Strategy divided students into some groups which consist of four to five students each other. Each group decided what subtopics are to be investigated as well as the goals of the study, and then prepare and present the text in front of class (Isjoni, 2009). During the learning process, by using this strategy, the students can communicate freely to elaborate their ideas, opinions and arguments and then implemented their investigation. This study is aimed to find out whether there is any significant difference in improving writing skills between the students who learn by using Group Investigation Strategy and those who do not use the strategy.

There have been studies regarding GI strategy. One of them was by Mayasari (Mayasari, 2012). The result of this study suggested that Group Investigation can be used to improve students' ability in writing. The same result came from a study by Murtinah (MURTINAH, 2018) and Goi (GOI, 2013).

## 1. The Writing Process

Writing as one of productive skill needs a process to produce text. Writing process is a process that requires some steps of what a writer must do in order to make a good writing that is understandable by readers. Writing process is a way that students write based on writing instruction that emphasizes on what students think and so on as they write (Tompkins, Campbell, Green, & Smith, 2014). Furthermore, writing is never a one-step action; it is an ongoing creative act (Oshima & Hogue, 2006). It means that there are some steps should be taken in writing the text. The steps of writing process:

### a. Pre-Writing

Pre-writing is an activity when the writer thinks of what he or she wants to write. Prewriting is a way of warming up the writer's brain before writing. There are two ways of warming up the brain: brainstorming and choosing and narrowing a topic (Oshima & Hogue, 2006). Thus, the purpose of pre-writing is to determine the students' ability to choose topics or ideas that would be written.

### b. Drafting

Second step of writing process is drafting. Drafting is an activity that writer writes what he or she planned at the first step. According to Tompkins, drafting is the time to pour out ideas, with little concern about spelling, punctuation, and other mechanical errors (Tompkins et al., 2014). Thus, drafting is an activity that is done by the writer in which he or she writes all ideas that he or she thinks before without paying attention on mechanical aspects of writing.

### c. Revising

After finishing the draft of the writing, a writer goes to the next step, that is revising. In revising, the writer rereads or looks back to his or her writing and rearranges some unclear words or sentences. The same as the statement from Tompkins, revising is not just polishing writing; it is meeting the needs of readers by adding, substituting, deleting, and rearranging the material (Tompkins et al., 2014). Thus, revising is the step when the writer corrects their draft whether there is the mistake or not.

### d. Editing

Editing is the last activity in process of writing. Editing is an activity where the writer results his or her final form of writing. In this step, the writer corrects all of mistakes in his or her writing before became a good one. Editing is another aspect of writing when the writer read again the text and minimize the mistake (Carroll, Wilson, Klimow, & Hill, 2018).

## **2. Aspects of Writing**

In writing activity, to know whether the writing text is good or not, we can evaluate several aspects of writing skill. In this study, the researcher used content, organization, structure and mechanics for evaluating students' writing.

### **a. Content**

Content refers to the ideas in paragraph such as gathering some ideas to be a good paragraph. According to Boardman, the content must be:

1. Interesting to read; good ideas
2. Excellent supports
3. Unifield; no irrelevant sentences

(Boardman & Frydenberg, 2008)

### **b. Organization**

Nurgiyantoro stated that writing is how paragraphs are arranged to be a good text and content (Nurgiyantoro, 2010). The first is topic sentence, the second are supporting sentences and the last main part is concluding sentence. Thus, according the statement above, in this section, organization focused on paragraph that should have a topic sentence with controlling idea, supporting, and concluding sentence and paragraph has coherence.

### **c. Structure**

The structure refers to grammar using in sentence. Grammar is a theory of language, of how language is put together and how it works (Linda & Peter, 1995).

This part is focused on basic grammar such as tenses, verb forms, noun forms, preposition, articles and the use of good connectors.

### **d. Mechanics**

According to Tompkins, the punctuation, capitalization, spelling, sentence structure, usage and formatting considerations specific to poem, scripts, letter and other writing forms are included in mechanics (Tompkins et al., 2014). In this aspect, mechanics is focused on good paragraph format, punctuation, demonstrate good control over use of capital letter.

### **e. Elements of Paragraph**

In writing, we need some ideas to make some sentence and paragraph. We can explore the ideas from the activities we do, the people we know, the place we go for activities, all can give us ideas for writing and we must write down the important information for make a good paragraph. In writing recount text, the ideas can be taken from activities, experience or incidents that happened in the past.

Based on statement from Boardman, a paragraph is usually short (about eight to fifteen sentences) and always includes a beginning, a middle, and in the end. The beginning is called the topic sentence, the middle part has supporting sentences. The end was called the concluding sentences (Boardman & Frydenberg, 2008). Furthermore, Oshima and Hogue stated that there are five aspects in writing a paragraph. They are topic sentence, supporting sentences, concluding sentence, unity and coherence. There are the explanation of them (Oshima & Hogue, 2006).

#### **1. Topic Sentence**

Topic sentence is a sentence which states the main idea of paragraph. It limits the topic which can be discussed completely at the space of single paragraph. The topic sentence becomes the most important part in paragraph because it briefly indicates what is going to discuss. The reader can see what the paragraph is going to be about and is therefore better prepared to understand it (Oshima & Hogue, 2007).

#### **2. Supporting Sentence**

The supporting sentence are sentences give details about the topic sentence by giving definition, reasons, facts, examples, statistic, comparison, quotation and classification.

#### **3. Concluding sentence**

The concluding sentence is a sentence which singles the end of the paragraph and impart the reader important points to remember. The reader could see the main topic while reading the concluding sentence gradually.

#### 4. Unity

Unity means that in paragraph discusses one and only main idea. The main idea is stated in the topic of sentence and then each and every supporting sentence explain it.

#### 5. Coherence

Coherence means that the text is easy to understand because of the supporting sentences.

### 3. Recount Text

#### a. Definition of Recount Text

Recount text is the text that tells about an activity, experience or incident in the past for the purpose of informing or entertaining the readers or audience. As Emilia stated, a recount text, especially personal recount is a text which retells past activities (Emilia, 2010).

Furthermore, Gerot and Wignell stated that recount text is recounting experience for informing or entertaining as the purpose (Linda & Peter, 1995).

Thus, based on the definitions above, recount text is one of the several kinds of the texts that introduces and teaches the students to describe past experiences by retelling activity, events and incident for the purpose of informing or entertaining their readers or audience about information.

#### b. Generic Structure of Recount Text

There are three generic structures of recount text according to Gerot and Wignell (Linda & Peter, 1995):

1. Orientation : Presents setting and introduce participants.
2. Events : Tell what happened, in what series.
3. Re-orientation : Optional closure of events.

#### c. The Language Features of Recount Texts

In addition, the language features of recount text are:

1. Focus on specific participants
2. Use of material processes
3. Circumstances of time and place
4. Use of past tense
5. Focus on temporal sequence (Linda & Peter, 1995)

#### d. Types of Recount Text

The researcher used recount text to tell about a past event or used to relate to experience. Based on the purpose of recount text that is informing, entertaining or reflecting. Moreover, recount is usually given in the order that the event occurred, and there are three types of recount texts (Richards, 2015).

##### 1. Factual Recount

Factual Recount records the details of an incident or event that has happened by reconstructing factual information. This can take the form of a science experiment, biographical, autobiographical, historical recount, traffic report or a short report.

##### 2. Personal Recount

Personal recount usually retells an event or activity that the writer was personally involved in. This may simply be an oral story, a diary entry or a personal letter.

##### 3. Imaginative Recount

Imaginative recount applies factual knowledge to an imaginary role and gives details of imaginary events in order to interpret and recount event, such as 'A Day in the Life of Ant' and 'My Life as a Roman Emperor'.

From those types of recount text, only one type of recount text was used, that was personal recount, that is about students' experience.

### 4. Group Investigation Strategy

Group Investigation is known as one of cooperative learning. Cooperative learning method has several types. Some of these are, Teams-Games-Tournaments, Learning Together, Jigsaw, Constructive Controversy and Group Investigation (Isjoni, 2009). Group Investigation Strategy is a strategy for teaching learning which is students work collaboratively in small groups to experience, examine, and understand their topic of study. Group Investigation is a strategy that was developed by Shlomo Sharan and Yael Sharan in 1992. Sharan and Sharan stated that Group Investigation is cooperative learning that combine cooperation and discussion with the process of investigation. In this strategy students work in group to regulate their learning materials in order to achieve learning goals (Sharan & Sharan, 1992). This strategy focused on students' participation and activity.

Group Investigation is a cooperative learning in which students help define topics for study and then work together to complete their investigations (Slavin, 2013). It means, this strategy gives the chance to students for more control over their learning process and chance to work together with their friends. Based

on the several definitions previously, it can be concluded that Group Investigation Strategy is way that can encourage learners to pay attention, thought and creative development.

### 5. Group Investigation Strategy in Teaching Writing

The steps of using Group Investigation Strategy in teaching writing recount text are as follows:

- a. Giving an example of recount text.
- b. Explaining the recount text and generic structure of recount text.
- c. Explaining the mechanic of writing a text, such as paragraph format, punctuation, and demonstrate good control over use of capital letter.
- d. Giving brief instructions about Group Investigation Strategy to the students.
- e. Dividing the student into group consisting of 4 students for each group. The students of each group divided based on their closeness and their friendship. To made it easier for them to work together.
- f. Giving some basic topics for each group to describe (topic selection). Each group was asked to determine the subtopic from the topic that have been given.
- g. All of the students were led to make a plan about what and how to do their investigation and who want to present their result in front of the class (cooperative plan). Then, the students were led to make a list of questions that would be used to investigate.
- h. The students were asked to carry out a plan that was formulated in the previous step (implementation, such as reviewing the subtopic, then each student in the group asked their friends about their holiday to help each of them remember their activities in holiday.
- i. Preparing Final Result. The researcher asked each group to analyze and evaluate the information obtained during previous step. Then each of them writes the text based on this information
- j. Presentation the Final Result. The representative of each group was asked to present their result of writing recount text.
- k. Evaluation. The researcher and students evaluated the contribution of each group to work as a whole class.
- l. Finally, the students were asked to submit their writing.

### Method

In this research, a quantitative approach was used to improve the students' writing skill in recount texts. According to Sugiyono, quantitative approach means that in the research the population or a particular sample is examined, and data is collected by using research instrument, then it is analyzed by using quantitative/statistics, with the aim to test the hypotheses that have been set (Sugiyono, 2013).

Related to this study, quasi experimental design was used. Quasi-experimental design has two groups, experimental and control group, but no different and random assignment of subjects. Both receive pre-test and post-test (Nunan, David, & Swan, 1992).

The researcher conducted the research by using one of the quasi-experimental designs: pretest-posttest nonequivalent control group design. In the experimental group, the students learned by using Group Investigation Strategy, while in the control group they learned by using non-Group Investigation Strategy. Here is the formula for non-equivalent control group design (Sugiyono, 2013):

$$\frac{O_1 \times O_2}{O_3 \ O_4}$$

\_\_\_\_\_ : Dash lines present the experimental and control group that have not been equated by randomization.

- O<sub>1</sub> : Pretest of experimental group.  
O<sub>2</sub> : Posttest of experimental group.  
O<sub>3</sub> : Pretest of control group.  
O<sub>4</sub> : Posttest of control group.  
X : Treatment for experimental group.

This formula means that both experimental group and control group would have a pre-test. Then the students got a treatment. After that, students had a post-test to measure their improvement in writing a recount text. The students' writings were rated by two raters.

This study took two classes of eight grade students as the sample by using purposive sampling technique, where one is experimental class and the other is control class with total 50 students. The instruments used in this study were observation (using observation sheet) and test.

## Results and Discussions

### 1. The Result of Observation in the Experimental Group and Control Group

In this study, the observation was applied by the researcher to know the implementation of non-Group Investigation Strategy in teaching writing skill. In the process of learning, there was four indicators to be observed. They were attendance list, attention, activeness, and discussing. The result of the table observation could be read as a scale of valued in the following table:

**Table 1**  
**The Category of Percentage**

Scale	Category
85%- 100%	Very Good
69%- 84%	Good
53%- 68%	Average
<53%	Low

Source: <https://saidnazulfikar.files.wordpress.com/2011/skripsi-audio-lingual-in-teaching-speaking.pdf>

The result of the observation shows that in most of the meetings, the students, in average, are categorized *very good*, especially in the aspect of attendance, attention and cooperation. They are categorized *good* only in the activeness aspect. While in the control group, in average, the students are categorized *very good* in attendance, attention and cooperation. They are in the lowest category in the aspect of activeness, which is *average*.

### 2. Statistical Analysis

#### a. Statistical Analysis of the Experimental Group

**Table 2**  
**Paired Samples Statistics**

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Post_Exp	71,120	25	4,2138	,8428
	Pre_Exp	53,640	25	3,4355	,6871

Based on the paired samples statistics of the experimental group above, it could be described that the mean of post-test was 71.120, the standard deviation was 4.2138, and the standard error mean was 0.8428. Meanwhile, the mean of pre-test was 53.64, the standard deviation was 3.4355, and the standard error mean was 0.6871.

**Table 3**  
**Paired Samples Correlations**

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Post_Exp & Pre_Exp	25	,703	,000

The paired samples correlations table above showed that the correlations between pre-test and post-test of the experimental group was 0.703 with probability (sign) score was 0.000.

**Table 4**  
**Paired Samples Test**

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	- Post_Exp - Pre_Exp	17,4800	3,0362	,6072	16,2267	18,7333	28,786	24	,000

In the result of paired sample test above, the paired differences showed that the mean between pre-test and post-test in the experimental group was 17.4800, standard deviation was 3.0362, standard error mean was 0.6072, and t-obtained was 28.786, at significant level of  $p < 0.05$  for two tailed test and degree of freedom 24 (2.064). Since the values of t-obtained was higher than t-table ( $28.786 > 2.064$ ) and the significant (2 tailed) was lower than computation with level significant ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ), it could be concluded that there was an improvement between students' pre-test and post-test scores in writing recount text by using Group Investigation Strategy.

**b. Statistical Analysis of the Control Group**

**Table 5**  
**Paired Samples Statistics**

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	PostTest	70,400	25	7,2615	1,4523
	PreTest	61,520	25	6,7769	1,3554

Based on the paired samples statistics of the control group above, it could be described that the mean of post-test was 70.4, the standard deviation was 7.2615, and the standard error mean was 1.4523. Meanwhile, the mean of pre-test was 61.52, the standard deviation was 6.7769, and the standard error mean was 1.3554.

**Table 6**  
**Paired Samples Correlations**

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	PostTest & PreTest	25	,465	,019

The paired samples correlations table above showed that the correlation between pre-test and post-test of the control group was 0.465 with probability (sign) score was 0.019.

**Table 7**  
**Paired Samples Test**

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	- PostTest - PreTest	8,8800	7,2748	1,4550	5,8771	11,8829	6,103	24	,000

In the result of paired samples test table above, the paired differences showed that the mean between pre-test and post-test in the control group was 8.8800, standard deviation was 7.2748, standard error mean was 1.4550, and t-obtained was 6.103, at significant level of  $p < 0.05$  for two tailed test and degree of freedom 24 (2.064). Since the values of t-obtained was higher than t-table ( $6.103 > 2.064$ ) and significant (2 tailed) was lower than computation with level significant ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ), it could be concluded that there was an improvement between students' pre-test and post-test scores in writing skill although they were not taught by using Group Investigation Strategy.

**c. Statistical Analysis of students' pre-test between the Experimental Group and Control Group.**

**Table 8**  
**Paired Samples Statistics**

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre_Exp	53,640	25	3,4355	,6871
	Pre_Cont	61,520	25	6,7769	1,3554

Based on the group statistics above, it could be described that the mean of the experimental group was 53.64, the standard deviation was 3.4355, and the standard error was 0.6871. Meanwhile, the mean of the control group was 61.52, the standard deviation was 6.7769, and the standard error was 1.3554.

**Table 9**  
**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	8,515	,005	5,186	48	,000	7,8800	1,5196	4,8247	10,9353

the independent differences showed that the mean pre-test of the experimental and the control group in equal variances assumed and equal variances not assumed were 8.515, standard error difference in equal variances assumed and equal variances not assumed were 7.880. The t-obtained in equal variances assumed and equal variances not assumed were 5.186, and the significant (2 tailed) was 0.000. Since the t-obtained was higher than t-table ( $5.186 > 2.01$ ) and the significant (2 tailed) was lower than computation with level significant ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ), it could be concluded that there was a significant difference between pre-test in the experimental group and the control group.

**d. Statistical Analysis of Students' Post-test between the Experimental and Control Group**

**Table 10**  
**Paired Samples Statistics**

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	PostExp	71,120	25	4,2138	,8428
	PostCont	70,400	25	7,2615	1,4523



Based on the group statistic above, it could be described that the mean of the experimental group was 71.120, the standard deviation was 4.2138, and the standard error was 0.8428. Meanwhile, the mean of the control group was 70.400, the standard deviation was 7.2615, and the standard error was 1.4523.

**Table 11**  
**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	11,798	,001	,429	48	,670	,7200	1,6791	-2,6561	4,0961
	Equal variances not assumed			,429	38,517	,670	,7200	1,6791	-2,6777	4,1177

### Conclusions

Most of the students had good motivation and interest in learning especially in improving their writing skill. It was seen in this study, some of student felt satisfied with their result of learning. Besides, almost of the students enjoyed the class because the researcher gave something different in learning writing. This finding was supported by Brown and Harmer, they said that with this method could encourages broader skills of cooperation and negotiation. So, it could help the classroom to become more relaxed and friendly place.

The result of statistical analysis showed that the mean of pre-test in the experimental group was 53.64 and the mean of pre-test of control group was 61.52 In pretest, control group was higher than experimental group, but in post-test the mean of control group (70.40) lower than the mean of experimental group (71.12). It was caused by some factors, such as; (1) Some of the students seem to had lost interest in writing, (2) the students did not focus in writing recount text, (3) some of the students did the test in a hurry because of the short time, they did not examine the answer carefully, 4) students forgot and did not know the vocabulary, 5) some students confused by instructions of group investigation strategy.

Based on the explanation above, it could be concluded that after getting treatment the mean of post-test of experimental group was higher than control group. It showed that the students had progress in writing skill. But there were no significant different between post-test score of experimental group and post test score of control group. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis (Ho) is accepted, and null hypothesis (Ha) is rejected.

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