

The Use of Sketching Technique to Assist Deaf Children in Writing Bahasa Melayu Essay's Report

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Abstract: Deaf children usually face language difficulties which affect their writing skills. This qualitative research is conducted to introduce a sketching method that will improve children's skills in writing Report in Bahasa Melayu. Scaffolding technique from Wood, Bruner and Ross is applied to lead deaf children in mastering writing technique proportionally. This experimental research involves 8 deaf students which are divided into two groups, namely experimental group and control group. Sample's knowledge, personal experience and education level have been taken into consideration in the sampling technique. Pre-test Instrument, Post-test and semi-structured interview are used to measure the efficiency of this technique. Experimental group received writing intervention, guided by sketching of the essay structure in two phases, which are sketching phase and drawing and writing phase. Essays written during Intervention B are assessed based on the marking rubric prepared. The data is described descriptively to answer research questions. External validity depends on the ability of writing technique as a responding variable, affecting the manipulated variable, which is student's writing ability. The findings in pre-test and post-test are compared. It is found that the mean of experimental group is higher, which is 8.5 compared to mean of control group, which is 0.5 after the intervention phase. When interviewed, all sample from the experimental group is interested to continue using this technique after the experiment. It is concluded that sketching technique is effective in helping deaf students to write a Malay language report.

Keywords: deaf student, writing skills, essay, Bahasa Melayu, sketches

INTRODUCTION

One's language ability is shaped by individual experiences and education. For deaf students, oral and sign languages have caused difficulties to make a writing. (Yahaya et al., 2013). Essay writing has also been identified as a major language problem among deaf students in primary school (Alias *et al.*, 2016). This is because they are unable to interpret their thoughts and visualisation into writings. Perry (2010) suggests that language acquisition by deaf students occurs visually as the language is acquired by sign language and sense of view. During discussion sessions, deaf students are able to state their main points of essay orally using sign language. However, they are not able to gain a good mark in examination because they are unable to structure sentences from their ideas cohesively and coherently (Liao, Lee, & Chan, 2013). Their ideas can not be channelled into writing form as these students are unable to construct the structure of essay for writing. Researchers are interested to examine the problem of deaf students to build an essay and to strive in overcoming this issue to improve student's academic achievement.

A good essay should be well explained, clear, concise and interesting. Currently, teaching essay has often been done by using photos to stimulate student's ideas. However, the essay written by the student is still

weak especially in coherent and cohesive aspects as they are unable to apply personal experience into their ideas. Their writing styles are often short and simple (Dostal & Wolbers, 2014). Students' idea development in their writing are not organised and not well explained (Karasu, 2017). Students are also unable to relate their ideas in written sentences (Rachmawati & Pramono, 2016). Diakogiorgi et al. (2015) states that this weakness is caused by a limited range of vocabulary, uninteresting sentences and no continuation of the ideas in a smooth and orderly manner. Perry (2010) also proves that deaf students often use repetitive words that limit their ideas to be expressed and stop their essays from being expanded interestingly.

Scaffolding technique used by teachers allow students to sketch their ideas. This also improves students' self-confidence to write the essay (Liao, Lee, & Chan, 2013; Giddens, 2009). Teacher's guidance supports the development of their skills which are wanted and also temporary (Yahaya et al., 2013). Scaffolding technique is introduced by Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) from the idea development Brooks (2009) concept which requires teacher's assistance, based on the ability in writing and knowledge of the students. This is when essay idea integration process from experience and knowledge occurs (Dostal & Wolbers, 2014).

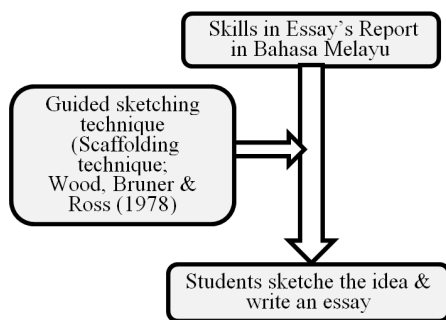


Figure 3. Intervention Implementation Method

Students are in Zone of Proximal (ZPD) because when they are assisted in developing a skill, they are able to master the skill better Brooks (2009). After the students mastered the technique, teacher's assistant will be stopped in stages.

Based on Baghban (2007) and Brooks (2009), kids can be guided to understand a more complex learning concept by sketches or drawings. This is because sketches will be the understanding and knowledge basis as they form their own ideas. From there, idea aids such as talking, visual vision and hearing will further develop their basis of understanding and knowledge.

In this research context, sketches refer to students' artwork in drawing their ideas for essay writing and spelling guidance which will be provided for a weaker group of students. Sketches prepared by students should be able to give idea and guidance to build essays cohesively and coherently. These sketches will be a wireframe for the students to write an essay's report in Bahasa Melayu. The structure of the essay is seen as a thinking tool which will help students in mastering writing skills. Assessments and measurements are subjective, depending on sketches produced by students which involve experience level and knowledge level of an essay topic.

Sketch Intervention Method. Sketches will be replacing the structure of an essay so that students are able to build a better essay.

Figure 3 shows intervention implementation method in writing an essay's report in Bahasa Melayu. Intervention carried out is divided into two, which are Intervention A and Intervention B. Intervention A is run at the beginning of teaching skills intervention. The sample is given three sets of essay question every week for two weeks to sketch essay ideas. Each set of questions runs for 30 minutes during teaching and facilitating session in classroom. Teacher will guide the sample to initiate the ideas, and the guidance will be reduced gradually when the sample starts to grasp the sketching and writing skills. The same set of questions will be reused during the second week to observe progress of the sketches by students. In intervention B, sketching and writing activities are held. Intervention B has a period of 4 weeks and the set of questions is different in each week. Each set consists of one essay question and takes place for three times per week. In

each set, students will sketch their essay ideas. After that, they are required to write the essay.

This research is conducted to study the effectiveness of sketching technique in helping deaf students to build a report format essay in a school located in southern part of Malaysia. Thus, objectives of this research are i) to observe writing skills of deaf students before and after acquiring sketching techniques, and ii) to study how sketching techniques are able to help deaf students in writing Malay language report format essay.

METHOD

This research involved eight students from year six who are studying at a Special Education School in Seremban, Malaysia. The subjects were selected to adhere to specified criteria chosen based on their experience in writing a report format essay, ability to construct simple sentences, mastering the skills in writing a report format essay.

Experimental research design was carried out to study the relationship between variables. It was found that the changes on responding variable which was the score was higher compared to control group. This is due to the change applied to manipulated variable which is the use of sketches as the research intervention. This research was carried out to study the effectiveness of using sketches in helping deaf students to write an essay's report in Bahasa Melayu.

Data were collected by giving Pre Test to both groups. After the intervention phase, both groups answered the same set of question again, which was the post-test. Both instrument sets are of the same contents of the essay question, time allocation, assessed method, and marking rubric which have been set by School Improvement Specialist Coach Plus (SISCS+) from Regional Transformation Program 2017. The scores obtained were then compared to find the difference between both tests after the intervention.

A semi-structured interview for students from intervention group was also carried out after the written exam. The interview was conducted to know how the sketching technique is able to help deaf students in writing an essay's report in Bahasa Melayu. This interview session allowed students to explain in detail their feelings, opinions and describe the effectiveness of the application of sketching technique in helping them to write a report essay.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

Findings

This section reports the qualitatively analysed data. This data consists of three parts, which are pre-test, post-test and interview. Pre-test and post-test data are Analysed descriptively based on scores achieved after answering essay question.

Table 1. Achievement of research samples from pre-test and post-test instrument

Group	Sample	Achievement in Pre Test		Achievement in Post Test	
		Percentage	Phase	Percentage	Phase
Experimental	R	32	Satisfied	78	Good
	V	20	Minimum	48	Satisfied
	N	16	Minimum	40	Satisfied
	I	8	Minimum	44	Satisfied
Control	H	28	Satisfied	32	Satisfied
	B	16	Minimum	16	Minimum
	K	16	Minimum	16	Minimum
	F	8	Minimum	8	Minimum

On the other hand, the interviews are analysed according to the theme based on constraints of research.

Writing Skills of Deaf Students Before and After Intervention

The level of writing skills of deaf students before they are exposed to sketching techniques are shown based on the findings of the assessed pre-test for each sample from both groups. Meanwhile, the level of writing skills of deaf students was obtained after students applied sketching technique in their essay, which was in post-test.

Table 1 shows the achievement of research samples from pre-test and post-test instruments. Achievement of experimental group was better because each sample showed an improvement in post-test based on their scores difference. Student R from experimental group recorded the highest scores difference from getting 42% in pre-test to 78% in post-test and has been in the good group of scores. The second highest score difference was recorded by Student I from experimental group with scores difference of 32%. The third highest score difference was recorded by Student V by 28% and fourth highest score was obtained by Student N by 24%. All three students from experimental group have shown an improved level of writing skills to a satisfied level. The increase in scores from control group was found in Student H with a 4% score difference. Students B, K and F did not show any improvement in their writing skills as there was no difference between their achievement in pre-test and post-test.

The huge gap difference in scores achieved between pre-test and post-test has shown an improvement in an essay's report in Bahasa Melayu by deaf students. The intervention that was applied to experimental group has shown a positive impact among students. Each sample in experimental group showed a huge leap of their marks and level of scores. Based on marking rubric, writing skills of Student R was in a good

level. The essay written by Student R has fulfilled the requirements of the question. Student's ideas have also been explained clearly and in an interesting manner. The use of grammatical sentences was accurate to the context. The use of words and vocabulary were good and in accordance with the context of the essay. A few misspellings and error usages of punctuation marks were found in Student R essay, but those errors did not affect the content of the essay.

Students V, N and I who were also in the experimental group have used sketching technique when writing an essay's report in Bahasa Melayu. Based on the marking rubric as the guideline in assessing pre-test and post-test, the students were found to be at a satisfied level. Essay ideas for all students were in line with the requirements of the question. Elaboration on ideas is good aided by a clear explanation and interesting storyline. Various sentences that are appropriate and coincide with the question are used. The use of words and vocabulary are also in accordance with the context of question. The three students had some spelling and punctuation errors but did not affect the content of the essay.

The Use of Sketching Technique as Structure of an Essay

During the semi-structured interview, all four students showed thumbs up as a good signal when they were asked if they enjoyed writing with the newly introduced sketching technique. This showed that the students were satisfied with this technique in helping them to write a report essay in Bahasa Melayu. The repetition of good sign actions showed by students was an indication that this technique was effective in helping them. This repetition of action occurred because the students were excited to express their opinion when interviewed. They were also more confident in expressing their opinions on the experience of using this technique.

Table 2. Interview Transcript for The Use of Sketching Technique

Researcher	: Why do you like to sketch in writing an essay's report?
Sample I & N	: I can sketch and write my sentence.
Sample R	: After reading the questions and thinking the idea of the essay, I will start to sketch my idea. Then I write more sentence.
Sample V	: I can sketch my idea accordingly with the questions.
Sample R	: After the thinking process of the idea, I can write my sentence very well because of the sketching.
Sample V & N	: That's right. Think the idea and write the essay.
Sample N	: More sentence that I can make and it feels so good.
Sample V, R & I	: I can get a lot of marks. This is because now I know how to write a good one.
Sample N	: Yes, I know now.
Sample V & I	: That's not that hard anymore.

Table 2 shows the interview transcript for the use of sketching technique in helping students with hearing impairments to write essay. Students I and N expressed that with sketching technique, they were able to write more sentences in the essay. A good essay should take into account the development of ideas in every part of the introduction, content and cover (Malaysian Examination Board). Development of ideas in appropriate sentences and meeting the requirements of the essay will also contribute to a better essay. The quantity of quality sentences in conveying the essay ideas is also an improved aspect with sketching technique intervention. This is seen in the increase of scores achieved by students in post-test. Students R and N added that they were able to write more sentences with this technique.

Student R stated that sketches ideas can be made according to individual creativity but should be guided by the requirements of the essay question. Students' ideas which are in visual form can be transferred into a sketch. Students V and I agreed with student R. Both of them stated that they achieved more marks by writing more sentences. The result of the interview analysis found that all four research samples expressed the desire to use this sketching technique in the future, including during examination.

Discussion

The implementation of sketching technique has proven effective in helping students to write their

essays. During the interview regarding the technique, students showed their confidence and enthusiasm. It proven by their expressions that are identified through lifting eyebrows and small eyes (Sandler 2018; Sandler 2012). When interviewed in this theme, the students' body gestures were observed. It was found that the students were in a state of readiness and was keen to continue the conversation (Sandler 2018; de Gelder et al., 2015). The sign language expressed was in a medium sized space between body and hand. Students also responded with smooth and fast finger gestures. The fluency during the interview process showed students' readiness to answer the interview questions. Students also did not hesitate to express their opinions and be positive during interview. According to Schlenker (2017), the behavior of sign language users as shown by the samples of this research is in an excited state. This is a positive behavior (Aviezer, Trope, & Todorov, 2012) which will promote good and meaningful interview findings.

Students agreed that the technique helps them to improve their creativity which results in better writing performances. Deaf learners are visual learners (Yasin et al., 2017). A visual form of sketches can also help the students to build a more interesting sentence that has cohesion and coherence Diakogiorgi et al. (2015); Brooks (2009).

CONCLUSION

This research examines the effectiveness of sketching technique in assisting deaf students to build an essay's report in Bahasa Melayu. The sketching technique improved students' writing skills. The improvement in score achievement and the skill level of each students has improved as a result of the effectiveness of this technique. The findings of the interviews conducted on the students also support the use of this technique in the future. The sketches have become a thinking tool for students to build an essay based on the picture of their own drawing as a structure of the essay. Structure of sentences written by students are focused because it is based on the sketches made by them.

Longer intervening periods with more intervention rates are expected to be undertaken for future studies. This will further enhance the writing skills of deaf students as skill guidance can be given more thoroughly and effectively. The themes in the questions during the intervention can also be varied taking into account the current development issues. For students who have difficulty in building simple sentences, this problem must be addressed first. This sketching technique can also be used as a basis for normal students and other special needs to build the essay. It is also hoped that this technique can be exposed to deaf students at an earlier stage so that their writing skills can be trained more effectively.

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