# THE USE OF GOOGLE DOCS AS MEDIA FOR COLLABORATIVE WRITING ACTIVITY TO IMPROVE SKILL ON WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT OF EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS OF SMPN 15 BENGKULU

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## ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the use Google Docs in collaborative writing activities to improve skill on writing descriptive text of eighth grade students of SMPN 15 Kota Bengkulu. This research is a classroom action research (CAR), which had been conducted in two cycles. The methods of data collection used in this research are writing test and observation. Writing test was administered to get the students' achievements while observation is conducted to obtain students' learning activities. The instruments of this study were writing test, observation sheets and documentation. Data analysis was done by data reduction, data presentation and conclusion. The results showed that the increase of score was known from the average score in cycle 1 (70,17) and in cycle 2 the score increased up to 9,0 therefore the final score achieved 79,17. In addition, the use of Google Docs in collaborative writing activities has also increased the percentage of learning mastery. In the cycle I, the

percentage of learning mastery was 33,33% and then increased to 50%, so in the cycle II, the percentage of learning mastery was 83.33%. It can be concluded that the use of Google Docs in collaborative writing activities has improved students' writing skills in writing descriptive text of eighth grade students of SMPN 15 Kota Bengkulu. Finally, there are some recommendations for the teachers as well as the further researchers.

*Key terms: Writing Skill, Descriptive Text, Google Docs.*

**INTRODUCTION**

Writing is a language skill considered difficult since it requires special attention in the process. A writer needs to study the mechanism of writing and develop the skills effectively and efficiently (Swanson, Harris & Graham, 2003). According to Abbas (2006), writing skills is the ability of individual to express ideas, opinions, and feelings to another party through a written language. A skilled writer will use the strategies in planning, drafting, and improving his or her writing to set its exact composition.

However, there are many problems that are faced by the students in the process of improving their writing skills. Some of the problems faced by students in writing are the ones that deal with social context and some deal with knowledge of the author. The other problems lie on the planning, evaluation or revision, and self-regulation (MacArthur, 2009). Those problems agree with the research conducted by Graham, Harris, MacArthur &

Schwartz (1991), which states that there are some obstacles in writing such as the lack of knowledge about the process of writing, the difficulty in generating topics and ideas, the lack of planning , the lack of strategy to produce and organize text, and difficulties in writing mechanism. Another common problem in classroom writing is the duration of the learning in the classroom. Since there is limited time in the classroom, it is not surprising that many teachers leave the tasks of writing as home works (Katie, 2006).

Besides the problems from the students, another obstacle which must be considered is the condition of the classroom environment. It is about how students' motivation in writing makes the classroom atmosphere better or even worse (Davis, 1999). Teachers should design classroom conditions to be more quieter and more comfortable to motivate students in writing. Once the condition of the class becomes unfavorable, it makes the students cannot concentrate on their writing, they just write something without knowing the meaning of the text itself. There are several techniques or strategies that can be used by teachers to teach writing skills to students. It is 1). Writing is just an assignment and 2). Writing is an authentic teaching (National Writing Project & Nagin, 2003).

Meanwhile, descriptive text is the text that describes an object or a thing to the reader so that the reader as if sense, experience, and see the event or thing that is written by the author. Moreover, a descriptive text is a form of writing that

describes somewhere in detail so that the reader can possibly be carried away in the atmosphere under description. The reader may, as if, see, hear and feel the thing that is written by the author. This is according to research conducted by Nurudin (2010).

In writing descriptive text, there are several methods that can be used and one of them is collaborative writing. Haring-Smith (1994) defines collaborative writing as the writing process that involves 2 or more writers. So in the collaborative writing process, the distribution of writing responsibility is very important.

Collaborative learning combines various elements in an active process including the use of media and technology as a tool. According to Barkley, Cross, and Major (2005), there are seven guidelines for teachers / lecturers in the process of collaborative writing. These guidelines are: (1) the students form a group or stay in pair and they are directed to put forward his ideas together (2) students organize their ideas in the form of outline to create a writing frame; (3) The students divide tasks in order to form early draft of writing. (4) then the draft that has been created will be discussed within the team to resolve any significant difference in the sound, content and style; (5) the team combines each piece into a single document; (6) then the team revises and edits the work, check its content and clarity as well as its grammar, spelling, and punctuation; and (7) at the end

of the revision, team submits their work to the professor for assessment and evaluation.

According to Gleeson (2006), collaborative learning method has been well-received by the students in the learning and skill development process. Collaborative learning method has also been investigated by Gokhale (1995) who states that collaborative learning encourages the development of critical thinking through discussion, clarification of ideas, and the evaluation of other people's ideas. These critical thinking skills improve their retention and interest in digging deeper information of the subject matter. However, there are some limitations of collaborative learning in the classroom. For example, students do not have much time to read and to collaborate together. The solution for this limitation is online learning. It is also in line with the research conducted by Macdonald (2006) that states that online learning method is very supportive at this time. Based on the consideration, it has been chosen that google docs application serves as a media for online learning . Google docs is chosen because this application is free. In addition, Google docs is considered to be able to facilitate the collaborative learning in real time. So the students and the teachers can collaborate to gain the expected result of their writing regardless their location at a certain time (without meeting face to face).

Based on the background, the problem in this study can be formulated as follows: Does Google Docs as media of

collaborative writing activity improve students' writing skills of descriptive text in SMPN 15 of Bengkulu?

**METHODOLOGY**

This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR). The location of the study was in SMP Negeri 15 Bengkulu that is located at Jl. Cempaka X Kebun Bler, Ratu Agung, Bengkulu. The instruments used in this study were 1. Writing test, which can be defined as the test prepared in the form of Student Worksheet and it presents the problems-solution exercise that must be done by the students. 2. Observation sheet, which can be defined as tool to observe or to assess learning progress in order to investigate the effectiveness of learning. Through this observation activity, the researcher is expected to obtain information about the classroom atmosphere, the interaction patterns on the learning activities, and the student activities. 3. Documentation, which involves written documentation (book and note) or pictures/photographs of learning activities during the process of writing descriptive text.

This study has been conducted in two cyles and each cycle consisted of four phases; planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. This study was conducted by collaborating with Afriyani Susanti, S.Pd. As observer, she was responsible for observing students' learning activity. In addition, she collaborated with researcher to plan the learning activities, to collect data, to analyze data, to evaluate the observation data and to take part in teaching learning activities. This research was

initiated by observation to obtain information and overview of the problems investigated, and to consider the treatments that had been taken by the teacher. Furthermore, the researcher and the teacher discussed the results of observation as well as planned and defined the treatment.

Data analysis technique was performed through three phases:

1. Provide an assessment of writing skill of descriptive text by using Google Docs as media for collaborative learning activity.
2. Find the average score of the results of the students' writing of descriptive text and the percentage of students writing mastery by using Google Docs as media for collaborative writing activity.
3. Compare some students' scores of writing descriptive text by using Google Docs as media for collaborative writing activity.

The student's score is declared passed the minimum grade if the student has achieved a grade of 75 or higher. The data were tested and were analyzed by using simple statistics to determine the mean value, and the value of learning mastery. According Sudjana (1989: 109) the data analysis was done by using formula below:

$$x = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

Note:      $x$   = *mean of score*

            *∑x = total score*     *N = total students*

The formula used to calculate student achievement based on the students' learning mastery is described below:

The percentage of students' learning mastery = $\frac{Ns}{N} \times 100\%$

Note:   Ns= *total students who achieve score 75 or above*

   N = *total students*

## RESULT AND DISSCUSSION
### Result

Based on the description of the research, it is known that each cycle suggests improvement from the previous lessons. In addition, the scores obtained can be considered as the result of modification of treatment in performing teaching learning activities.

The data analisis was performed at each cycle. In the cycle I, the students' writing score can be seen at the table below:

**Table 1. The Result of Writing Test in Cycle I**

| GROUP | WRITING ASPECT | | | | | SCORE | NOTE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N1 | N2 | N3 | N4 | N5 | | |
| GROUP 1 | 21 | 17 | 17 | 18 | 4 | 77 | GOOD |
| GROUP 2 | 20 | 14 | 14 | 16 | 3 | 67 | FAIR |
| GROUP 3 | 20 | 15 | 15 | 17 | 3 | 70 | FAIR |
| GROUP 4 | 18 | 16 | 15 | 15 | 3 | 67 | FAIR |
| GROUP 5 | 18 | 12 | 14 | 15 | 2 | 61 | FAIR |
| GROUP 6 | 22 | 18 | 18 | 17 | 4 | 79 | GOOD |
| TOTAL | 119 | 92 | 93 | 98 | 19 | 421 | |
| MEAN | 19,83 | 15,33 | 15,50 | 16,33 | 3,17 | 70,17 | |

Note : N1  = Content
       N2  = Organization
       N3  = Vocabulary
       N4  = Language Developmrnt
       N5  = Mechanical

There were 25 students who took the test. The students were divided into groups of 4-5 students. The mean of the test score was 70.17 and the percentage of students' learning mastery were 33,33%. It is showed that the students' learning outcome did not reach 75% of score 75 or higher of the total students. The students' learning mastery can be seen in formula below:

The percentage of students' learning mastery:

$$KB = \frac{Ns}{N}x100\%$$
$$= \frac{2}{6}x100\% = 33,33\ \%$$

Mean:

$$x = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$
$$x = \frac{421}{6} = 70,17$$

Based on the results of cycle I, there was no score in range VERY GOOD (85-100). There were 2 groups that achieved RANGE GOOD (75-84). There were 4 groups that achieved range FAIR

(60-74). There was no group that achieved RANGE POOR and VERY POOR. The mean of the score was 70.17. The percentage of students' learning mastery was 33,33%. It is showed that the students' learning outcomes did not reach 75% of score 75 or higher.

Based on the observation, it was seen that the students were enthusiastic enough in engaging themselves in the new lesson in classroom but when they did not understand the lesson they started to lose focus. The discussion method is quite helpful because the students shared the lesson with their friends and started learning together. However, there were some students who were not active in the discussion. It made the group discussion spent much time. Consequently, the time allocated for explaining the lesson and to write the text collaboratively by using Google Docs became ineffective.

Based on observations and writing test, it can be concluded that teaching learning process was not conducted well. As in observations result, there were students who didn't understand how to use Google Docs in collaborative writing activity. In addition, time allocation had been considered less than it had been expected. Moreover, dicssusion activity was not applied well.

Based on the feedback, the researcher and his partner decided to modify learning activities, for instance; change group arrangement which was considered inappropriate and roll the

groups who's the members were likely talkative. It was aimed to make students to pay more attention to the lesson.

The result of writing test in cycle II can be seen in the table below:

**Table 2. The result of writing tes in cycle II**

| GROUP | WRITING ASPECT | | | | | SCORE | NOTE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N1 | N2 | N3 | N4 | N5 | | |
| GROUP 1 | 20 | 16 | 17 | 16 | 4 | 73 | **FAIR** |
| GROUP 2 | 24 | 17 | 16 | 16 | 4 | 77 | **GOOD** |
| GROUP 3 | 24 | 18 | 18 | 22 | 4 | 86 | **VERY GOOD** |
| GROUP 4 | 24 | 18 | 19 | 22 | 4 | 87 | **VERY GOOD** |
| GROUP 5 | 22 | 17 | 16 | 18 | 3 | 76 | **GOOD** |
| GROUP 6 | 22 | 16 | 18 | 17 | 3 | 76 | **GOOD** |
| **TOTAL** | 136 | 102 | 104 | 111 | 22 | 475 | |
| **MEAN** | 22,67 | 17,00 | 17,33 | 18,50 | 3,67 | 79,17 | |

Note : N1 = Content
       N2 = Organization
       N3 = Vocabulary
       N4 = Language Development
       N5 = Mechanical

The students who took the test were 25 students. The students were divided into groups of 4-5 students. The mean value of the test score were 79.17 and the percentage of

students' learning mastery were 83,33%. It is showed that the learning outcomes of students have reached 75% of score 75 or above of the total students. The students' learning mastery can be seen in formula below:

The percentage of students' learning mastery:

$$KB = \frac{Ns}{N} x100\%$$
$$= \frac{5}{6}x100\% = 83,33\,\%$$

Mean:

$$x = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$
$$x = \frac{79,17}{30} = 79,17$$

Based on the results of cycle II, there were 2 groups that achieved range VERY GOOD (85-100). There were 3 groups that achieved range GOOD (75-84). There were 1 group that achieved range FAIR (60-74). There were no group that achieved range POOR and VERY POOR. The mean value of the score was 79.17. The percentage of students' learning mastery was 83,33%. It is showed that the learning outcomes of students have reached 75% of score 75 or above.

Based on observation activity in Cycle II, the teacher had already seen the improvement in teaching learning process. The

students were challenged to be faster in writing descriptive text because they were curious with this application. As the result, they were more enthusiastic and more active in discussion activity. It was also seen from the fact that there were many students asked the teacher while in the middle of teaching learning process. Nevertheless, there were some students who tend to still passive in the process of discussion.

Based on the observation and the writing tests, it showed that the learning process was already conducted well i.e. on the observation of the students were able to use Google Docs as media of collaborative writing activity. Classroom interaction and writing activity had not done into maximum conditions but all the indicators had been achieved in teaching learning process. In addition, the writing test results had also achieved the expected results.

**Disscussion**

Based on the results of cycle I, there was no score in range VERY GOOD (85-100). There were 2 groups that achieved RANGE GOOD (75-84). There were 4 groups that achieved range FAIR (60-74). There was no group that achieved RANGE POOR and VERY POOR. The mean of the score was 70.17. The percentage of students' learning mastery was 33,33%. It is showed that the students' learning outcomes did not reach 75% of score 75 or higher.

However, based on the result of cycle II, there were 2 groups that achieved range VERY GOOD (85-100). There were 3

groups that achieved range GOOD (75-84). There were 1 group that achieved range FAIR (60-74). There were no group that achieved range POOR and VERY POOR. The mean value of the score was 79.17. The percentage of students' learning mastery was 83,33%. It is showed that the learning outcomes of students have reached 75% of score 75 or above.

In cycle I, the groups that passed the minimum grade consisted of 2 groups and the groups that did not pass the grade were 4 groups in total. In cycle II, the groups that passed the grade were 5 groups in total. And the group that didn't pass the grade was only 1. The score improvement was taken from the mean of both clycle that was 9, in which the mean score of cycle I was 70.17 and the mean score of cycle II was 79.17. The comparison of mean score of cycle I and cycle II can be seen on the chart below:
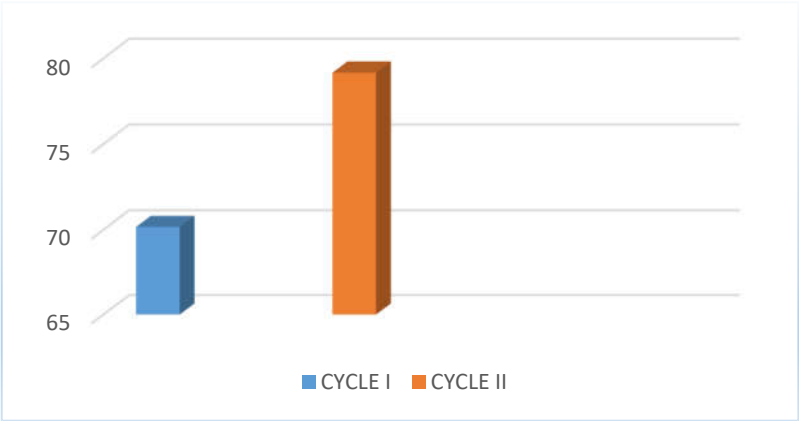


**Chart 1.The Comparison of Mean Score of Writing Test**

The learning mastery of writing skill improved at 50% which had been taken from the deviation from cycle I and cycle II. The comparison of learning mastery in writing skill from cycle I and cycle II can be seen on the chart below:
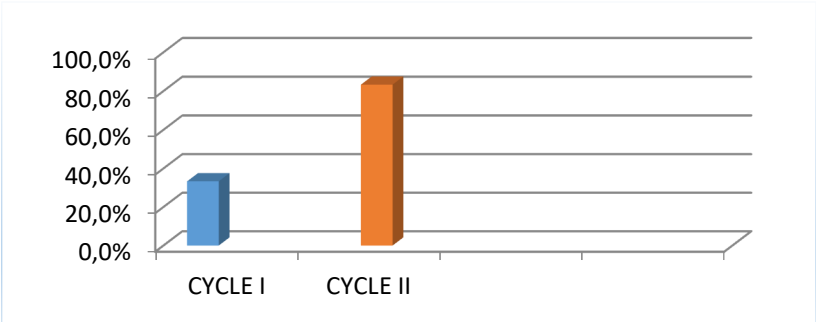


**Chart 2. The Comparison of Learning Mastery**

Based on the comparison of cycle I and cycle II, there was significant difference in the result of writing test.

In the cycle I, the result showed that there was no score in range VERY GOOD or in range 85-100, there were 2 groups that achieved RANGE GOOD or in range 75-84, there were 4 groups that achieved range FAIR or in range 60-74, there were no group that achieved in range POOR and VERY POOR. While in the cycle II, the result showed that there were 2 groups that achieved range VERY GOOD or in range 85-100, there were 3 groups that achieved in range GOOD or in range 75-84, there were 1 group that achieved range FAIR or in range 60-74, there were no group that achieved range POOR and VERY POOR. The comparison of

the result of writing test in cycle I and cycle II can be seen in the table below:

**Table 3. The Comparison of Writing Test Score of Cycle I and Cycle II**

| Range of the Score | The Number of Student | | Assessment Category |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Cycle I | Cycle II | |
| 85-100 | - | 2 | VERY GOOD |
| 75-84 | 2 | 3 | GOOD |
| 60-74 | 4 | 1 | FAIR |
| 40-59 | - | - | POOR |
| 0-39 | - | - | VERY POOR |

Based on the result it was found that there was an improvement in students' writing test results. The results of this study are consistent with the results of research conducted by Setyawan, Martono, and Rochsantinigsih (2012) which concluded that the use of Google Docs in collaborative writing activities were capable of improving student learning outcomes, either in written test results or student activities. The improvement of writing test results could be seen from various aspects of writing assessment tests, such as: content, organization, language development, vocabulary, and writing mechanical. In addition, there was also a development in building a climate in the classroom, such as: the increase of students' activity, the increase of student enthusiasm, and the

betterment of the students' attitudes during the learning process.

According Aminloo (2013) and Ghufron (2014), collaborative writing techniques bring good impact on the students' writing. This is in line with Sulisworo's research (2012) that states that the model of collaborative learning with online media is able to run properly if the educators are able to build motivation of learners consistently. Besides, literacy and learning stages are also compatible with the implementation of collaborative writing activities.

However, the result of this study argues the results Zhou, Samson, and Domizi (2012) which shows that the use of Google Docs does not have a significant impact in writing. This may be due to the implementation of the learning model that is not conceptual. As conveyed by Sulisworo (2012), studies that apply the model of classroom action research will improve the implementation of contextual models.

The implementation of collaborative writing using Google Docs also has many advantages. Google Docs can be used easily and quickly so that the application is suitable for facilitating digital writing workshop that combines peer editing by grouping cooperatives and small fine-tuned group written instructions. In addition, according to Zhou, Samson, and Domizi (2012) state that the use of Google Docs in a collaborative writing activity raises a good perception of students.

**CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

Based on the results of the cycle I and II, it can be concluded that learning by using Google Docs in Collaborative writing activities can improve the ability in writing descriptive text of students of VIII.A of SMPN 15 Bengkulu academic year 2016/2017. The improvement is indicated by the mean value, while in the cycle I the mean score was 70.17 however after revising and re-administering collaborative writing activity in the cycle II, the mean score increased by 9 so that it became 79.17. The use of Google Docs in collaborative writing activities also increases the percentage of learning mastery. In the cycle I the percentage of learning mastery was 33,33% and in cycle II the percentage of learning mastery increased 50%, so in the cycle II (83.33%).

Through the use of Google Docs in the collaborative writing activity, the students' positive attitude became more prominent. The students are more enthusiastic, active, creative, serious, tolerant, confident, motivated and challenged to produce the best work. Besides, the teacher becomes the facilitator of learning so that students can be motivated and followed the spirit in the learning process. The use of Google Docs in collaborative writing activities can also improve the creativity of students especially in writing descriptive text.

Based on the experiences of conducting this study, the following suggestions are given in order to develop strategy in English classrooms:

First, the researcher hopes the school will facilitate the use Google Docs in the collaborative writing activity because it can improve students' creativity and quality of learning, especially in SMPN 15 Bengkulu. In addition, the school must develop teachers' and students' ability to use technology in teaching and learning. The school is also expected to support and motivate the teachers to continue to develop the abilities and creativity in using technology in order to be able to facilitate either students who are creative and students who are not proficient enough to use technology in learning.

Second, the researcher hopes the result of this study can be a consideration to develop strategy in teaching and learning so it becomes an inspiration to further development of teaching models. Because the researcher realizes that the teachers are not only source of information but also facilitator and motivator for students in the teaching learning process. In addition, the researcher also hopes that the result of this study can be the suggestion and guidance for students in order to build creativity in writing either in descriptive text or in another genre. The students are expected to continue to practice the positive use of Google Docs in collaborative writing activity.

Finally, the researcher hopes that the result of this study become the inspiration for the other researchers. This study is not perfect yet so it needs further researches that investigate the use of Google Docs in collaborative writing activities in class in order to obtain more relevant research findings

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