

The Effects of Visual Auditory Kinesthetic Learning Style as Technique in Improving Students' Writing Ability

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research were to investigate whether VAK learning style as a technique has significant effects in improving students' writing ability and the students' interest in VAK learning style as a technique in studying English writing. This research employed quasi experimental design. The population of this research was the eleventh grade students of Science Program SMA Negeri 1 Bontomarannu in academic year 2014/2015. This research used cluster random sampling. The sample consisted of 60 students that belonged to two groups: 30 students in the experimental and control group. The data was collected by using writing test and questionnaire. The findings showed that there was an improvement on the students' writing ability after the treatment. The students' result of posttest of experimental group was more significantly improved than the students' result of posttest of control group by the mean score $73.2 > 58.1$. The difference of both scores was statistically significant based on the t-test value at significant level 0.05 in which the P-value is lower than the significant level ($0.0001 < 0.05$). The mean score of the students' interest in the experimental group was 91.63 and it was categorized as strongly interested.

Key words: VAK Learning Style, Writing, Learning Style

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the important skills in English. It can help the students learn and develop their English by expressing their knowledge, experience and the way of thinking. Writing is one of the activities deal with how to write idea, information, knowledge, or experience and understand the writing to acquire knowledge or some information to share and learn. Writing activities motivate students to engage their ability in learning English.

Most of English students of foreign language are not interested in writing because writing is such a difficult skill to be mastered. Similarly, Richard and Renandya (2002: 303) stated that writing is the most difficult language skill to be mastered by the students. The difficulty in writing also happens among Indonesian Students, especially at a Junior High School.

There are many reasons why writing is regarded difficult. There are two major difficulties in composing the writing for EFL students. They are connecting ideas and writing ideas in readable form. That is why, the writer needs writing process which comprise four main stages: planning, drafting, revising and editing. Moreover, Richard and Renandya (2002: 303) state that the difficulty lies how to generate and organize ideas using an appropriate choice of vocabulary, sentence, and paragraph organization, and translate these ideas into a readable essay. According to Oshima and Hogue (1997, p 15), sentence is a group of words that contains at least one subject and one verb. Meanwhile, Paragraph is a group of sentences about one topic and has three parts: the topic sentence, the body (supporting sentences), and the concluding sentence. An essay is a group of paragraphs about one topic which has three main parts: introductory paragraph, body or supporting paragraph and concluding paragraph (Oshima and Hogue, 1997). On the other hand, essay is a group of paragraphs that contains at least three paragraphs. It is clear that the difference between paragraph and essay are two distinctive things. Paragraph is a part of essay. In other word, to make essay is necessary to elaborate some paragraphs.

Dealing with the difficulty in writing skill, the eleventh grade students of Science Program SMA Negeri 1 Bontomarannu, Gowa Regency had similar problems. Based on the interview conducted on 15th January 2015 to an English teacher at SMA Negeri 1 Bontomarannu, the teacher said that the students had problem in writing skill. Generally, they did not have ideas and got difficulty in choosing and using appropriate words or vocabulary. Besides that, they did not only get a difficulty in grammar to make sentences into paragraph but also in determining mechanic (punctuation and spelling). In other hand, most of the students were still lack of interest in learning writing.

Referring to the case above, the researcher implemented learning style to solve the problem of writing that is Visual Auditory Kinesthetic (VAK) learning style. In this research, researcher focused on writing descriptive essay. According to McWhorter (1992: 266), a descriptive essay presents ideas by providing extensive details about the characteristics of people, events, or places. The details are intended to appeal senses, to help creating a mental picture, or make feeling a certain way. Learning style refers to an individual's characteristics and preferred ways of gathering, interpreting, organizing and thinking about information. According to Walsh (2010: 8), essentially learning style consists of: first, visual learning which involves watching and reading style, means learning by using demonstrations, written

materials, and videos tools. Second, auditory learning means mostly learning by listening. Also, lectures and audiotapes are effective teaching tools for this audience. And third, kinesthetic learning means learning by doing. It has manipulative, models, and hands-on opportunities to build or assemble.

Consequently, in this research the researcher applied the VAK learning style to enhance the students' writing ability at the eleventh grade students of Science Program SMA Negeri 1 Bontomarannu. Hopefully, this learning style can give a positive impact on students' interest in studying English as well as in improving writing ability. In addition, the VAK learning style can encourage students to write essay in which they may initially be afraid to make errors. Given this background, the purpose of this research as to investigate whether VAK learning style as a technique have significant effects in improving students' writing ability, and to investigate whether the students are interested in VAK learning style as a technique in studying English writing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Reid (1995), learning style generally is categorized into three major categories. They are cognitive learning style, sensory learning style and personality learning style. Cognitive learning style refers to analyzing fact and proceeding to ideas. Sensory learning style refers to the physical and perceptual learning style channels which the student is the most comfortable. Personality learning style refers to learning by interaction with people and having many friendships. There are five kinds of perceptual learning style: visual learners, auditory learners, tactile learners, kinesthetic learners, and haptic learners. In this research, the researcher focused on the three perceptual learning style: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic (VAK learning style). VAK learning style is a combination of three learning style enables students to seeing, hearing and moving around during the lesson.

Alavinia and Farhady (2012) in their study revealed that the performances of learners possessing different learning style (auditory, kinesthetic and visual) had significant amount on vocabulary tests. Ahmed (2012) reported that the different learning style could improve the students' writing skill of Saudi EFL. It is also an important factor in successful language learning teachers' skills in matching and diversifying learners' style. Meanwhile, Rakap (2010) also pointed out that learning style (Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic) had positive effect on adult students' knowledge acquisitions. Oflaz and Turune (2012) in their research about "The effect of learning style on group work activities" found that if the teacher takes the learning style of the students in the language classroom, they could participate and do well in group work performances. Sen and Yilmaz (2012) conducted about "The effect of

learning style on students' misconceptions and self-efficacy for learning and performance". The result revealed that there is a statistically significant effect of learning style (assimilator and converger) on MDCT (Melting and Dissolving Concept Test) and SELP (self-efficacy for learning and performance) scores. Rassool and Rawaf (2008) about "The influence of learning style preference of undergraduate nursing students on educational outcomes in substance use education" showed that the learning style preference had significant influence in intervention confidence. In another research, Wu (2010) entitled "An Exploratory study of the Language-learning Motivation of ESL Learners at Vocational Education Institute in Hong Kong" found that there was positive relationships between LLSYs (language-learning styles) and LLM (language-learning motivation) and more motivated learners had greater variety of LLSYs (i.e., Auditory, Visual and Individual preferences) in learning results.

METHOD

Design and Samples

This research applied quasi experimental method by using two groups namely; an experimental and a control group. "Quasi experimental design is used when there is no possibility to randomly assign individual participants to group due to the permission to use schoolchildren in a study so that the researcher has to agree to keep exiting classroom intact" (Gay et al., 2006: 257).The researcher used cluster random sampling technique which means two classes from the six classes takes as the sample (XI Science Program 1 until XI Science Program 6). Class Science Program 1 was taken as experimental group and class Science Program 2 was taken as control group. The result of calculation of the total number of sample was 60 students.The experimental group employed treatment by using VAK learning style as a technique, while control group was employed by using conventional technique (IPG group works) where the students were asked to write descriptive essay based on the topic given by the teacher. Both of groups were given pretest and posttests.

Instruments and Procedures

This research used two kinds of instruments in collecting data namely writing test and questionnaire. Writing test consisted of pre-test and post- test. The students were given a descriptive writing test means that the researcher provided some topics to be chosen and developed into essay. The pre-test was used to measure of the prior knowledge of the students, while the post-test was aimed to see the students' writing ability after giving the treatment to improve writing skill. In assessing the students' writing skill, five aspect of speaking were covered: content, organization, language use, vocabulary, and mechanics.

To get the students' score in writing, the researcher applied the following scoring system based on Jacob (1981). Meanwhile, a questionnaire was distributed to students in the experimental group to measure their interest in learning writing through VAK learning style.

The treatments in experimental and control groups were conducted for six meetings based on the general steps below:

Experimental Group

1. The researcher introduced the material about descriptive essay.
2. The researcher focused on one topic that was written in descriptive essay for each meeting.
3. The researcher asked the students how to get the idea in writing descriptive essay by using VAK learning style. In this case the researcher had some steps, they are: First, the researcher stimulated to the students to get their ideas by moving around to reach the object of topic given. Second, teacher asked the students to see the object of topic directly. Third, the researcher also helped the students some instructions to start writing and describing it in descriptive essay. So, it means all process covered the use VAK learning style.
4. Both of teacher and students discussed about the object that would be described. At *the* same time, the students were able to write some vocabularies from the object in brainstorming whether in individual, pair, or group work.
5. From the brainstorming, the students were asked to write them into a sentence and sentence into descriptive essay.
6. All procedures of five meetings for experimental group were shown in lesson plan. Here, the topic for the first meeting was what is descriptive essay, the second meeting was describing people about My Security, the third and four meeting were describing place about My School (SMA Negeri 1 Bontomarannu) and the fifth meeting was describing thing about My Motorcycle.

Control Group

1. The researcher introduced the material about "what is descriptive essay?".
2. The researcher focused on one topic that was written in descriptive essay for each meeting.
3. The researcher asked the students to write descriptive essay whether in individual, pair, or group work.

4. All procedures of six meetings for control group were shown in lesson plan. Here, the topic for the first meeting was “what is descriptive essay?”, the second meeting was describing people about My Idol, the fourth and third and meeting was describing Place about My Favorite Place, and the fifth meeting was describing thing about My Favorite Collection.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed through quantitative analysis. To get the score, the researcher used scoring scale by Jacob (1981) which includes the content, organization, language use, vocabulary and mechanics on the students' process of writing. Calculating the mean score and standard deviation of the students' achievement by using SPSS 20.0. The data of questionnaire was analyzed by using Likert Scale. It aimed to see the students' interest about the use of VAK learning style in improving writing ability. The measuring of instrument item of Likert scale consisted of positive and negative statements.

In writing test, the data were analyzed by employing the following procedures:

1. Scoring the result of the students' test

To get the students' score in writing, the researcher applied the following scoring system based on Jacob (1981):

Table 1 Scoring Rubric

No	Rating Aspects	Score	
		Higher	Lower
1	Content	30	13
2	Organization	20	7
3	Language use	25	5
4	Vocabulary	20	7
5	Mechanics	5	2
	Total	100	34

2. Classifying the score of the students

In line with Jacob (1981), the scoring rubric of writing consists of 6 classifications, namely: Very poor, poor, fair, good, very good, and excellent. The maximal score is 100 while the minimum score is 34. From those classifications each classification includes 11 range as interval score.

It means that the interval score use refers to normal curve. Therefore, if the learners got maximal score in each components in scoring system, the learners would get 100 score but if the students get minimum score each components of scoring system, the students would get 34 score. So, based on the rubric score, toknow the students' writing ability in writing descriptive essay before and after treatment, it would be classified into six categories as follow:

- ✓ 89 - 100 is classified as excellent
- ✓ 78 - 88 is classified as very good
- ✓ 67 - 77 is classified as good
- ✓ 56 - 66 is classified as fair
- ✓ 45 -55 is classified as poor
- ✓ 34 - 44 is classified as very poor

3. Calculating the mean score and standard deviation of the students' achievement by using SPSS 20.0.
4. Testing the hypothesis of the significant differences between students' writing improvement of experimental group and the control group by calculating the value of t-test.

The data of questionnaire was analyzed by using Likert Scale. It aimed to see the students' interest about the use of VAK learning style in improving writing ability. The measuring of instrument item of Likert scale consisted of positive and negative statements as follows:

1. Scoring Data

Gay et al, (2006:129) stated that there are five basic types of scale that are used to measure the students' interest. The scales are Likert Scale, Semantic Differential Scales, Rating Scales, Thurstone Scale, and Guttman scale. But, in this research, the writer just used one scale that was Likert Scale. in this scale, each respondent asked individually to respond a series of statements by indicating whether or not he or she is strongly agree (SA), agree (A), undecided (U), disagree (D), or strongly disagree (SD) about the statements given. Each response had its own value. Look at the table below:

Table 2. Likert scale

Series of statement	Score	
	Positive	Negative
1. Strongly agree	5	1
2. Agree	4	2
3. Undecided	3	3
4. Disagree	2	4
5. Strongly disagree	1	5

(Gay at al., 2006)

2. Calculating questionnaire

In Calculating questionnaire data into percentage, the researcher used the percentage technique by using this formula:

$$P = F / N \times 100\%$$

NOTE:

P = Percentage

F = Frequency of the Answer

N = Number of the Students

(Gay at al., 2006)

3. Measuring the students' interest

As explained by the researcher before, the questionnaire consisted of 20 items, 10 positive items and 10 negative items. If the respondent chose all positive statement with *strongly agree*, he/she would get 100 score while if he/she chose all positive statements with strongly disagree, he/she would get 20. The rating score ranges from 20-100 (interval 80). Since the questionnaire got five categories, the interval that was used to determine the category is $80/5 = 16$. So, the students' interest can be classified as follow:

Table 3. Interest classification

Score	Classification
85-100	Strongly interested
69-84	Interested
53-68	Moderate
37-52	Uninterested
20-36	Strongly uninterested

(Sugiyono, 2008)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Students' Writing Ability

Regarding the findings explained previously, it shows that the writing ability of eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Bontomarannu improved in the experimental group. It is supported by the students' frequency and rate percentage of the students' pretest and posttest result. The students score in the experimental group by using VAK learning style in teaching writing was better than before treatment.

Referring to the students' writing pretest of both the experimental and the control group, the researcher analyzed it in terms of the five components of writing based on scoring rubric of writing suggested by Jacob, 1989. The result of finding shows that most of the students are still lack of skill to express their idea in writing descriptive essay.

It is similarly with Richard and Renandya (2002:303) state that the difficulty lies how to generate and organize ideas using an who appropriate choice of vocabulary, sentence, and paragraph organization, and translate these ideas into a readable essay. It indicates that most of the students still find difficulties in overall components of writing.

a. The Students' Writing Ability in Pretest and Posttest of Experimental and Control Group

The distribution of the score of the students' writing ability for experimental and control group in post-test shows a difference from the pretest. After conducting the treatment, both groups showed an improvement, but in the experimental group, improvement was higher than that of the control group. The mean score and standard deviation of the students' writing ability in pre-test and post-test for experimental and control group are shown in table below:

Table 4. The Statistical Summary of Pretest on Each Writing Aspect Assessed in Experimental and Control Groups

Variable	Mean Score		Difference
	Experimental group	Control Group	
Content	15.43	14.03	1.4
Organization	8.8	7.96	0.84
Language Use	8.73	6.96	1.77
Vocabulary	8.86	7.9	0.96
Mechanics	2.16	2.06	0.1
Average	44	38.9	5.1

Based on the data above, the mean score of five analytical aspects in the control group and the experimental group is different. The average of the mean score in experimental group (44) is higher than the average of mean score in control group (38.9).

Table 5 below shows that the mean score of five analytical aspects in the control group and the experimental group is different. The average of the mean score in experimental group (73.2) is higher than the average of mean score in control group (58.1).

Table 5. The Statistical Summary of Posttest on Each Writing Aspect Assessed in Experimental and Control Groups

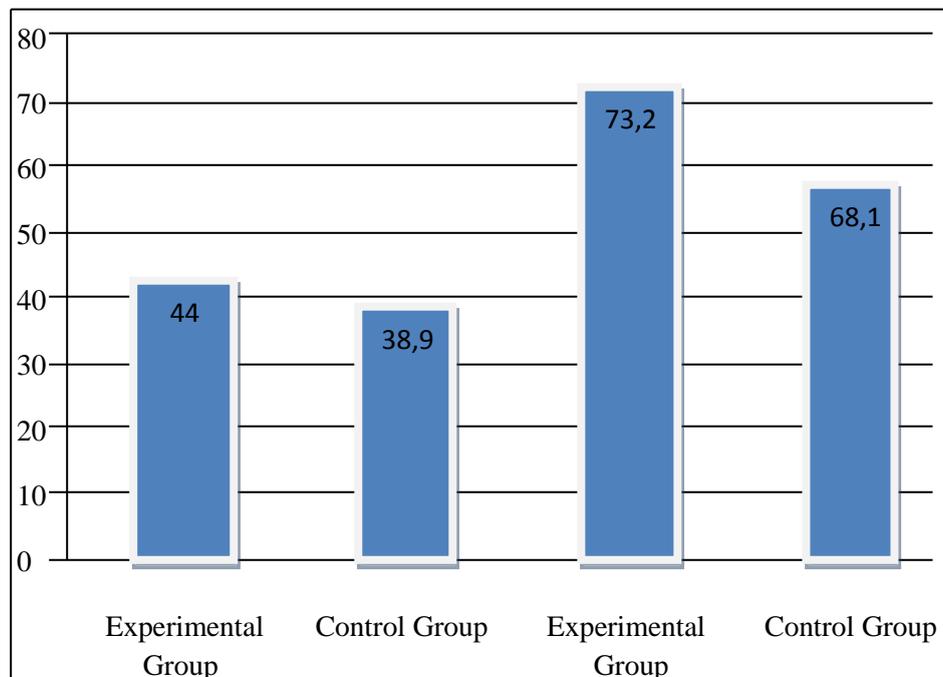
Variable	Mean Score		Difference
	Experimental group	Control Group	
Content	22.3	20.03	2.27
Organization	15.4	12.03	3.37
Language Use	17.36	12.13	5.23
Vocabulary	15	11.4	3.6
Mechanics	3.06	2.3	0.76
Average	73.2	58.1	15.1

Table 6. The Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Students' Writing Ability in Pre-test and Post-test.

Group		Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Pre-test	Experimental Group	44	8.49
	Control Group	38.9	5.77
Pos-test	Experimental Group	73.2	6.06
	Control Group	68.1	7.65

Table 6 show that the mean score of pretest in the experimental group is higher than the control group, ($44 > 38.9$). 44 and 38.9 are classified as very poor classification. This means that the students of the experimental and control groups are the same category before treatment. Meanwhile, the mean score of post-test in the experimental group is higher than the mean score of the control group, ($73.2 > 58.1$). 73.2 is classified as very good category. While, 58.1 is classified as fair category. This means that the VAK learning style which was applied in the experimental group is more successful to increase the students' writing ability than the conventional technique (IPG works) which was applied in control group.

The results of the students' improvement in experimental and control group are shown in figure 1.



b. Test of Significance (T-test)

The hypotheses were tested by using inferential statistics. In this case, the researcher used t-test (testing of significance) for independent sample test. It was intended to know the significance difference between the result of the students' mean scores in the pretest and the posttest in the experimental and the control groups. The result of t-test was calculated by using SPSS version 20.0. After using the statistics, the researcher found the probability value of t-test as presented in the following table 4.19

Table 7 The Probability Value of T-test of the Students' Writing Ability Improvement in the Experimental and the Control Groups

Independent Samples Test									
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Pre_Test Equal variances as sum ed Equal variances not ass umed	.667	.418	2.684	58	.009	5,03333	1,87511	1,27988	8,78678
			2,684	51,089	.010	5,03333	1,87511	1,26904	8,79762
Post_Test Equal variances as sum ed Equal variances not ass umed	1,205	.277	8.433	58	.000	15,03333	1,78273	11,46481	18,60185
			8,433	55,126	.000	15,03333	1,78273	11,46085	18,60582

Based on the result of data analysis as summarized in table 4.19 in the pretest of the experimental and the control groups, the researcher found that the probability value or p-value (0.009) was smaller than the level of significance α (0.05) or $0.009 < 0.05$. Whereas, the data in posttest of the experimental group and the control group shows that probability value (p- value) was smaller than α ($0.0001 < 0.05$). It means that the alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted while the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected. It is assumed that there is significant difference between the students' writing ability improvement in the experimental and the control groups after the treatment. The significance of T-test can be seen in the following table 4.20.

Table 8 Significant Difference

Variables	P - Value	(α)
Remarks		
Posttest of Experimental and Control Groups significantly different	0.0001	0.05

Table 8 above shows that the students' writing ability of posttest in the experimental and the control groups is significant. The students who were treated through VAK learning style got higher score than the students who were treated by IPG works (conventional technique). In other word, it can be concluded that the use of VAK learning style in teaching English writing is effective to improve students' writing ability.

Students' Interest

In accordance with the finding, it shows that the eleventh grade students of Science Program SMA Negeri 1 Bontomarannu, Gowa Regency were interested in learning writing process by using VAK learning style. Most of the students' responses in the experimental group was categorized as 'strongly interested'.

According to the data of the students' interest classification, the students had strong interest to learn English writing by using VAK learning style. It is proven by the mean score of the questionnaire which was 91.63 as classified into 'strongly interested'. This is also proven by the aggregate percentage of the students who got from questionnaire on item 1 up 20 about the items. The result (table 9) shows that 26 (87%) students of 30 students were strongly interested and 4 (13%) students of 30 students were interested. From these findings, it can be inferred that most of the students have positive responds to the use of VAK learning style as a technique in improving the students writing ability. In other word, the students are interested in writing descriptive essay by using VAK learning style.

Table 9 The Percentage of Students' Interest

No.	Score	Classification	Experimental group	
			F	%
1	85-100	Strongly interested	26	87
2	69-84	Interested	4	13
3	53-68	Moderate	0	0
4	37-52	Uninterested	0	0
5	20-36	Strongly uninterested	0	0
Total			30	100

Furthermore, after analyzing between the result of the students' writing achievement and the students' interest in learning writing by using VAK learning style, it can be assumed that the use of VAK learning style is more applicable, effective, and useful to increase the students' writing ability and the students' interest.

It is proven by the mean score of the experimental group in posttest which was 73.2 as categorized as good classification, while the mean score of interest was 91.63 as categorized as strongly interested classification.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The use of VAK learning styles as a technique was effective to improve the students' writing ability. It is proved by the mean score of the students' posttest in the experimental group and control group which were significantly different. The mean score of the posttest in experimental group was higher than control group. It can be seen from the students' mean score of posttest was 73.2 for experimental group, while for control group the students' mean score of posttest was 58.1. The T-test of the students' writing ability improved in experimental and control group in posttest was significantly different. The inferential statistics supports this statement is which p-value $0.0001 < 0.05$.

The students' interest in experimental group was high interest to learn English writing by using VAK learning styles. It was proved by the mean score of the questionnaire was 91.63 categorized as strongly interested classification.

Based on the conclusion above, the researcher put some suggestions and recommendation. In teaching writing especially in teaching writing descriptive essay, the teacher should be more creative for preparing their teaching writing material. They can use VAK learning styles as a technique to improve the students' writing ability. The teacher should give some enough opportunity and more chance for the students to practice their ability in writing by using VAK learning styles because it is easier to practice and enjoyable for students. The researchers also recommend that the teacher give various techniques in teaching English especially in writing based on the students' interest and need. To attract the students' attention, the teacher should be more creative in managing the class, so the students are fun and enjoyable in learning and teaching process.

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