



FOSTERING ACTIVE LEARNING AND COLLABORATION IN ENGLISH CLASS THROUGH RALLY TABLE STRATEGY

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of the Rally Table strategy in improving students' English writing skills at the junior high school level. The research employed a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test and post-test non-equivalent control group design. The participants consisted of eighth-grade students from MTsS Al-Qosimiyah Sorek Satu, divided into experimental and control groups. The experimental group received writing instruction using the Rally Table strategy, a cooperative learning technique where students take turns contributing to a written task collaboratively. In contrast, the control group received conventional teaching methods. Data were collected through writing tests and analyzed using statistical methods to determine the significance of the improvement. The results indicated that students in the experimental group showed a significantly higher improvement in writing performance compared to those in the control group. These findings suggest that the Rally Table strategy can effectively enhance students' ability to generate ideas, organize content, and use grammar and vocabulary appropriately in writing. It is recommended that English teachers integrate cooperative learning strategies such as Rally Table into their writing instruction to foster active participation and improve writing outcomes.

Keywords: Rally Table, cooperative learning, writing skill, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), quasi-experimental

1. INTRODUCTION

In modern English language teaching, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context such as Indonesia, there is an increasing need to shift from traditional teacher-centred methods to more interactive and student-centered approaches. Traditional lecture-based teaching often results in passive learning, where students are less engaged, hesitant to participate, and struggle to retain language concepts effectively. This becomes a significant challenge, especially in the development of essential English skills such as reading, writing, speaking, and vocabulary mastery.

The 2013 Curriculum (Kurikulum 2013) in Indonesia emphasizes the importance of active learning, collaboration, and student engagement. Teachers are encouraged to facilitate learning activities that promote critical thinking, problem-solving, and cooperation. In line with this educational paradigm, cooperative learning strategies offer promising alternatives to conventional methods. One such strategy is the Rally Table, a cooperative structure where students work in small groups and take turns writing responses to a shared task or question on



a single piece of paper. This technique fosters equal participation, encourages accountability, and creates a supportive learning environment.

In teaching and learning process, teacher has used some strategies to improve students' writing ability. Researcher found the students have the problem in writing skill. The researcher assumes that some of students' difficulties in writing the text can be caused by the uninteresting teaching strategy that has been used by the teacher. The teacher needs an appropriate strategy to help the students better in writing skill.

The Rally Table strategy supports both cognitive and affective domains. Cognitively, students are required to think critically and creatively when generating ideas or solving problems together. Affectively, the strategy promotes positive interdependence, mutual respect, and peer collaboration. Moreover, since students must wait for their turn to contribute, they are more likely to listen attentively and reflect on their peers' input before adding their own. This process enhances language input and output, which are crucial for language acquisition.

Rally Table is a very versatile structure that can be used in any curriculum area. It is a simple way of bringing two pairs together to create a larger group with a common aim and purpose. As stated by Kagan (2009:10), the purposes of this strategy are sharing information, developing ideas, and helping simple recall. It can develop group support for complex ideas and checking.

Despite the proven benefits of cooperative learning strategies in various subjects, their application in EFL classrooms-particularly the use of Rally Table-remains underexplored in many Indonesian schools. There is limited empirical data on how this strategy affects student participation and collaboration in English lessons, especially at the junior high school level.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate how the Rally Table strategy can be effectively implemented in the English classroom to enhance active learning and foster student collaboration in writing ability.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quasi-experimental design using a pre-test and post-test control group structure to investigate the effectiveness of the Rally Table strategy in enhancing students' writing skills in English. The research was conducted at MTSs AL-QOSIMIYAH Sorek Satu, involving two intact classes of eighth-grade students. One class was assigned as the experimental group, which received writing instruction through the Rally Table strategy, while the other class served as the control group and was taught using conventional individual writing exercises. Prior to the intervention, both groups were administered a writing pre-test to establish baseline data. After the treatment, a post-test was conducted to assess any improvement in students' writing performance.

The primary instrument used in this research was a writing test designed to measure students' ability to compose a short narrative text. The test was constructed based on the Indonesian junior high school English curriculum and covered key writing components such as content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. A detailed scoring rubric adapted from Jacobs et al. (1981) was employed to ensure reliable assessment of student writing across these five aspects. To ensure content validity, the test and rubric were reviewed by two English education experts. In addition, an observation sheet was used during the treatment phase to monitor student participation and collaborative behaviour in the experimental group. A student perception questionnaire was also distributed to the



experimental group at the end of the treatment to gather insights regarding their engagement and experience with the Rally Table strategy.

The data from the pre-test and post-test were analysed quantitatively. Descriptive statistics, including the mean and standard deviation, were calculated for both groups. A paired sample t-test was applied to determine the significance of improvement within each group. Furthermore, an independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the post-test writing scores between the experimental and control groups. All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS version 25. with a significance level set at 0.05. These analyses were intended to determine whether the Rally Table strategy had a significant positive effect on students' writing performance.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of the Rally Table strategy in improving students' writing skills in English. Data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests administered to both the experimental and control groups. The descriptive statistics for students' writing scores are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Pre-test and Post-test Scores

Group	N	Mean (Pre-test)	Mean (Post-test)	Gain Score
Experimental	30	65.20	78.50	13.30
Control	30	64.80	70.10	5.30

As shown in Table 1, the experimental group experienced a notable increase in writing scores from a pre-test mean of 65.20 to a post-test mean of 78.50, resulting in a gain of 13.30 points. In contrast, the control group showed a smaller improvement, with a gain of only 5.30 points.

To test whether these differences were statistically significant, a paired sample t-test was conducted to compare the pre- and post-test scores within each group. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Paired Sample t-Test Results

Group	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Experimental	8.421	0.000
Control	3.107	0.004

The paired sample t-test revealed a statistically significant improvement in both the experimental and control groups. However, the improvement was more substantial in the experimental group, as indicated by the higher t-value and lower significance level.

Furthermore, an independent sample t-test was conducted to determine whether the difference in post-test scores between the experimental and control groups was statistically significant. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Independent Sample t-Test on Post-test Scores

Group	Mean	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Experimental	78.50	3.872	0.000
Control	70.10		

The independent sample t-test showed that there was a significant difference between the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups ($t = 3.872$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates



that students taught using the Rally Table strategy outperformed those who received traditional instruction in writing.

These results suggest that the Rally Table strategy is effective in improving students' writing performance in English, particularly in fostering better organization of ideas, vocabulary use, and overall composition quality. To analyse the statistical significance of the difference, an independent sample t-test was conducted. The result of the post-test showed that the mean score of the experimental group was 78.50, while the mean score of the control group was 70.10. The t-count value obtained was 2.74, and the t-table value at a significance level of 0.05 ($df = 38$) was 2.02.

Since $t\text{-count} (2.74) > t\text{-table} (2.02)$, the null hypothesis (H_0), which states that there is no significant difference between the two groups, is rejected. This confirms that the Rally Table strategy had a statistically significant effect on students' writing ability. The improvement was particularly evident in idea development, paragraph organization, and vocabulary usage.

These results indicate that the Rally Table strategy effectively enhances students' writing performance and provides a meaningful alternative to traditional teaching methods in EFL classrooms.

The results of this study demonstrate that the Rally Table strategy has a significant positive effect on students' writing performance in English. The experimental group, which was taught using the Rally Table strategy, showed a greater increase in post-test scores compared to the control group, which received conventional instruction. This finding aligns with previous research that emphasizes the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies in language classrooms (Kagan, 2009; Lubis, 2019).

One of the key factors contributing to the success of the Rally Table strategy is its emphasis on structured collaboration and shared responsibility. As students take turns writing and discussing their ideas within a group, they are actively engaged in the writing process. This collaboration not only enhances their cognitive processing of the language but also supports peer learning, where students can model good writing practices and provide feedback to one another. The group dynamics in Rally Table foster a low-stress environment that encourages participation from all members, including those who may be less confident in their writing abilities.

The significant improvement in the experimental group's writing scores suggests that Rally Table helps students better organize their thoughts, expand their vocabulary, and apply grammatical rules more accurately. This supports the theory that writing is a social and interactive process, and that learning to write benefits from dialogic engagement and negotiation of meaning among peers. Furthermore, the structured turn-taking component of Rally Table ensures that every student contributes equally, reducing the tendency for dominant students to take over the task and allowing quieter students to actively participate.

Interestingly, although the control group also showed some improvement in their writing scores, the gain was considerably smaller. This suggests that while traditional instruction can lead to learning, it may not be as effective in promoting deeper engagement and collaborative thinking. The difference in outcomes highlights the added value of incorporating cooperative learning strategies like Rally Table into language instruction.

Moreover, student feedback from the post-treatment questionnaire indicated that most participants found the Rally Table activity enjoyable and helpful. Many students reported increased motivation to write and a better understanding of how to structure their ideas. These



qualitative findings reinforce the quantitative data and provide further evidence that Rally Table positively influences students' attitudes toward writing.

In conclusion, the findings of this study suggest that the Rally Table strategy is a promising instructional approach for enhancing students' writing skills in English. Its structured, collaborative format supports active engagement, fosters creativity, and promotes meaningful peer interaction. Therefore, English teachers are encouraged to integrate cooperative learning techniques such as Rally Table into their classroom practice to improve student outcomes in writing.

4. CONCLUSION

This study investigated the effectiveness of the Rally Table strategy in improving students' writing skills in English, using a quasi-experimental design involving an experimental and a control group. The results showed that students who were taught using the Rally Table strategy demonstrated significantly greater improvement in their writing performance compared to those who received conventional instruction. The statistical analysis confirmed that the Rally Table strategy positively influenced students' ability to organize ideas, use appropriate vocabulary, and apply correct grammar in writing.

The findings support the notion that cooperative learning strategies, particularly Rally Table, can foster active engagement, collaboration, and a more supportive classroom environment. By encouraging structured participation and peer interaction, the strategy helps students become more confident and effective writers. Furthermore, students expressed positive attitudes toward the strategy, noting that it made writing activities more enjoyable and easier to understand.

In light of these findings, it is concluded that the Rally Table strategy is an effective pedagogical tool for enhancing writing skills in junior high school English classes. Teachers are encouraged to incorporate this strategy into their instructional practices to promote both academic achievement and student engagement. Future research may explore the use of Rally Table in other language skills, such as speaking or reading, and in different educational contexts to further validate its effectiveness.

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