

Effect and Students' Perception of the ESA (Engage, Study, Activate) Teaching Method Implementation in French Writing Class

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Abstract—Writing descriptive texts in a foreign language is still considered difficult due to the lack of learner's motivation, lack of vocabulary mastery, and the lack of using proper grammar. Therefore, a method is needed to overcome these difficulties. The ESA (Engage, Study, and Activate) method is believed to contribute to solving these difficulties. This study attempts to investigate the significance of the implementation of the ESA method in a French writing class, and the students' perception of its implementation. This study is conducted by using a quantitative, pre-experimental method with one group pretest-posttest design. The data was collected by conducting writing tests and distributing a questionnaire. The test results were analyzed by using SPSS software. The results show that the implementation of the ESA method can improve students' ability to write descriptive texts. Furthermore, based on the questionnaire analysis, it is found that most of the students think that the implementation of the ESA method could help in improving the ability to write descriptive texts. This study contributes to improving learners' language skills through an effective learning method.

Keywords: *descriptive texts, ESA (Engage, Study, and Activate) method, writing skill*

I. INTRODUCTION

One type of text learned in language learning is descriptive text. However, writing descriptive texts, including in French language, is still considered difficult by students because of several factors. Based on the results of previous research, the difficulties in writing descriptive text are partly due to the low interest or motivation of foreign language learners to take part in learning to write, thus affecting the value of writing low descriptive text results (Retno, 2015; Siahaan, 2013). In addition to the low interest of learners in participating in learning to write, another factor found to be difficult is the use of grammar. Many students still have difficulty in using the correct grammar for writing, which causes the quality of descriptive texts to be still low (Husna, 2013; Siahaan, 2013). Another difficulty factor is vocabulary mastery. Based on the results of the study, learners face difficulties using the proper vocabulary in making good descriptive texts (Franchiska, 2017). Therefore, we need a certain learning method that is more effective and can help overcome these difficulties. By using appropriate learning methods, learning can run optimally. Among the many learning methods that exist the ESA method (Engage, Study, and Activate) is one method that is believed to be able to contribute to solving writing difficulties, including writing descriptive texts, and in improving students' writing abilities. This is

because based on some previous studies, the implementation of the ESA method has proven to be able to overcome learner boredom and increase interest in participating in writing skills so that learners can actively participate in participating activities (Harjali & Hidayah, 2017). Furthermore, the ESA method in learning can also improve learners' ability to use grammar and mastery of vocabulary in writing (Herdi & Ningsih, 2018). In fact, by applying the ESA method as a whole in learning, learners show positive achievements (Khoshsima & Shokri, 2016). However, research on the application of the ESA method in learning French descriptive text writing skills has not received much attention. Therefore, this research is relevant and important to do. The purpose of this study was to determine the significance of the application of the ESA method in improving the skills of writing French CECRL A2 level descriptive text and knowing the students' responses to the application of the method in learning.

This ESA method was developed by Jeremy Harmer in 1998. In his book, Harmer (1998) states that the ESA method is a method that contains elements needed by learners in learning, namely: engage, study, and activate. In addition, Harjali and Hidayah (2017) stated that ESA is one of the learning methods with the phases presented to help learners learn effectively in language classes. The phases in the ESA learning method are Engage, Study, and Activate. The engage phase, according to Harmer (1998), is a point in the teaching section where the teacher tries to stimulate the learner's interest, it also involves feeling. For example, teachers use image media to stimulate learners to think in the target language.

The second phase of the ESA learning method is called study. According to Harmer, (1998) the study phase is a learning activity in which learners are asked to focus on language (or information) and how the language is formed. This phase ranges from the study and practice of one single voice to an investigation of how an author achieves certain effects in long texts; from examination and verb practice to learning informal speech transcripts to discuss speaking style. For example, the teacher teaches descriptive text writing skills which include the purpose, characteristics, structure of the text, and the grammar used

Next, the final phase of the ESA learning method is activating. Harmer (1998) states that the activate phase consists of exercises and activities designed to make learners use the language as freely and communicatively as they can. For

example, the teacher gives a practice of writing descriptive text with picture media to practice the learner's ability.

A. French descriptive text

A descriptive text has a structure or framework consisting of several parts, as stated by Giroux (2012) that descriptive text consists of three very different parts, namely: introduction, development, and conclusion. Giroux (2012) also adds that the dominant form of time is the form of time (to tell a place or someone in the present) and l'imparfait (the past).

Meanwhile, Hammond (1992) states that descriptive text structures consist of identification and description. Identification describes the phenomenon described, while the description describes the part, quality, characteristics, and others. Lacasse (2011) breaks down the structure of this descriptive text into several sequences, namely: (1) introduction, consist of sujet améné, sujet posé, and sujet divisé; then (2) développement, consist of marquer de relation, énoncé de l'aspect, and développement des idées; also (3) conclusion, which consist of marquer de relation, rappel, résumé, and ouverture. More clearly, the order of the structure and its explanation is explained as follows (Lacasse, 2011).

a) Introduction phase (introduction)

- Sujet améné, is the general idea of the subject that will be developed in writing.
- Sujet posé, is to write clearly about the subject that is going to describe.
- Sujet divisé, is to write the aspects that will be developed.

b) Development phase (développement)

- Marquer de relation, which each paragraph begins with conjunction from previous paragraph. For example: dans un premier temps, premierement, tout d'abord.
- Énoncé de l'aspect, the first sentence in each paragraph should put the main aspect.
- Développement des idées, all that described after the first sentence is to describe the main aspect. At least, a sentence consists of two conjunction or marqueurs de relation.

c) Conclusion phase (conclusion)

- Marquer de relation, is the conjunction that start a sentence in paragraph.
- Rappel, is remention about the main aspect.
- Résumé, is a brief conclusion from subject description that discussed.
- Ouverture, is part to mention things that we want, suggestion, point of view about the subject discussed.

Based on several statements about the structure of the descriptive text, it can be concluded that in general the descriptive text contains three main elements, namely: introduction, development, and conclusion of the object described. Thus, we must follow the steps of writing descriptive text so that the author's goal to explain an object can be presented accurately and in accordance with its structure.

When a descriptive text in French has been made into a complete piece of writing, there needs to be an evaluation aimed at measuring the quality of the French descriptive text by determining the value or score. Determination of the quality of the results of writing skills such as descriptive text is referred to as evaluation which is generally adjusted to the level of learning of the writing skills being carried out.

II. METHOD

The research method used in this study is a quantitative approach with a pre-experimental method with one group pretest-posttest design. The participants of this study were students of the French semester 2018/2019 academic year who were selected using random sampling techniques. In this case, the researchers chose 26 students.

The research instruments used were tests and questionnaires. This test is a matter of writing descriptive texts with the topic Une belle ville en Indonésie (A beautiful city in Indonesia) at the pretest stage, and the theme of Ma ville natale (my birth city) at the posttest stage. Both discussed the same theme, namely Décrire une ville (Describe a city). Each test is 25 minutes long with 80-120 words. The ESA method was applied at the treatment stage, which first for the engage phase. During the engage phase, the researcher was using a picture of cities in Indonesia to stimulate students in finding French words related to the picture given. Some students stated 'tranquille', 'belle', 'bruyant', and so on. The Figure 1 given on the engage phase arouse students thinking in French language.



Fig. 1. Semarang city at the engage phase

The second phase of ESA method is the study, this activity focused on learning specific material in order to gain information. In this research, material given to students is descriptive text's example and its characteristics as follow.

Dans un texte descriptif, l'auteur indique comment est un objet, un paysage, un lieu, une atmosphère, un être, une action, un événement, une situation, un concept, une procédure, un processus, un fonctionnement.

Le sujet peut être décrit par l'énumération de ses propriétés, de ses qualités ou de ses parties. On peut aussi le situer dans le temps, dans l'espace ou en fonction d'autres éléments. Pour faire cette mise en relation, on peut avoir recours à des procédés tels que les comparaisons et les métaphores.

En premier lieu, le plus souvent, **on nomme l'objet décrit** puis on le détaille en une succession **d'éléments**, eux-mêmes parfois décomposés en **sous-éléments**. Ces divers éléments de l'objet décrit sont reliés par des **mots de liaison** permettant au lecteur de se repérer dans **l'espace**.

Fonction/intention de l'auteur

Décrire. Produire une image de ce que le lecteur ne voit pas, mais qu'il peut imaginer : un lieu ou un personnage (portrait), par exemple.

On peut le trouver dans...

Roman, nouvelle, conte, compte rendu d'un événement sportif, la définition d'un dictionnaire, une planche anatomique, un guide touristique, l'itinéraire d'un parcours, le mode d'emploi d'un appareil...

Caractérisation de la description

- Temps : imparfait ou présent
- Verbes d'état
- Adjectifs qualificatifs
- Groupes nominaux prépositionnels
- Propositions subordonnées relatives
- Métaphores et comparaisons
- Nombreux champs lexicaux

Organisation de la description

- Du plus large au plus précis
- Du haut vers le bas
- De la gauche vers la droite
- Organisation construite grâce aux connecteurs spatiaux et aux compléments circonstanciels de lieu.

The last phase of ESA method in the treatment stage is the activate. At the activate phase, the students would express their writing skills using the information they obtained from two previous phases. They also revising each other's writing by giving feedback and correction.

The assessment criteria of the descriptive writing test given are using the Tagliante and Christine writing assessment criteria (2005) which contains: (1) Compliance with the order given: this aspect of the assessment is to measure the contents of the essay in accordance with the order given or not. This aspect can be seen from the title and theme of the essay; (2) Essay organization: this aspect of assessment is to measure the relationship between sentences on the contents of the essay and the suitability of the written essay structure; (3) Accuracy of information provided/ideas/ideas: this aspect of assessment is to measure the telling of the object described by the author in a detailed and clear manner so that the reader can imagine the object described; (4) The use of appropriate simple sentence structures: this aspect of assessment to measure the accuracy of the use of simple sentence structures used; (5) Vocabulary appropriateness: this aspect of assessment is to measure the choice of words or various terms used by the author; (6) Use of simple conjunctions such as "et", "mais" and "parce que": this aspect of assessment to measure the use of simple conjunctions. The perfect score for a descriptive text writing test is 15 points.

Furthermore, the pretest and posttest value data collected was processed by a statistical calculation of SPSS type Paired

Samples Test to find out the t value and the level of significance of the data.

In addition to the test, the researcher also compiled a questionnaire on respondents' responses to the implementation of the ESA method which consisted of 20 questions about perceptions adapted from Niven (2007) which included: motives, interests, expectations, attitudes, knowledge, and experience. Questionnaire data were obtained by calculating a Likert Scale and analyzed by calculating the percentage level.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data acquisition, students get a pretest score of 57.77 out of 100. The acquisition of this score is caused because there are still many students who have not been able to make writing that fits the theme, the use of vocabulary that is less diverse, and the use of grammar errors so that the acquisition of the score can be said small.

After treatment was carried out with the implementation of the ESA method, the students' posttest score was 73.34 out of 100. The acquisition of the score was driven by the ability of students who have been able to make writing in accordance with the theme, using more varied vocabulary, making descriptive texts with their proper structure. , and also the use of proper grammar.

The effect from the engage phase could be seen from students' interest in making text, they were keeping a good intact with the whole class situation which caused conducive ambiance. Also, the study phase affected their ability to make proper descriptive text without looking at their notes, they conducted on making proper descriptive text on their own. The students were more trained in making a descriptive text as the result of the activate phase.

Based on these data, researchers analyzed the acquisition of student scores by statistical calculations using the SPSS Paired Samples Test type to measure data from the same source, the results obtained as can be seen in the following Table I:

TABLE I. 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 pre-test - posttest	-15,57692	7,80345	1,53038	-18,72881	-12,42504	-10,178	25	,000	

Based on these calculations, it can be seen that an increase in the average value of students' ability to write descriptive texts which was originally 57.77 from 100 on the pretest to 73.34 from 100 on the posttest. This shows an increase in the average value of 15.57 points. Furthermore, based on statistical calculations, the calculated t value was 10.178 from the t table value 2.787 and the significance value <0.05. This shows that the implementation of the ESA method was proven to contribute positively in helping improve students' ability to write descriptive French texts.

Furthermore, based on the results of the questionnaire responses of respondents using the Likert scale, the first aspect of perception to be analyzed is the question of motives. The question about this motive was asked to find out the students'

perceptions of motives from the ESA method implemented. The first question about motives is whether they are motivated to involve themselves or engage in learning activities using the ESA method. Based on the acquisition of answers, as many as 74.61% of students agreed that they were motivated to involve themselves or engage in learning activities using the ESA method. The next question regarding the perception of motives is whether students are encouraged to participate in learning activities carried out by the ESA method. Based on the acquisition of answers, as much as 76.15% of students are encouraged to participate in learning activities carried out by the ESA method. The next question is whether the engage phase of the ESA method succeeded in increasing students' motivation to take lessons. The question was answered in agreement with as many as 78.46% of students that the engaging phase of the ESA method succeeded in increasing students' motivation to take lessons. The percentage column regarding the perception of students' motives can be seen as shown below (Fig. 1):

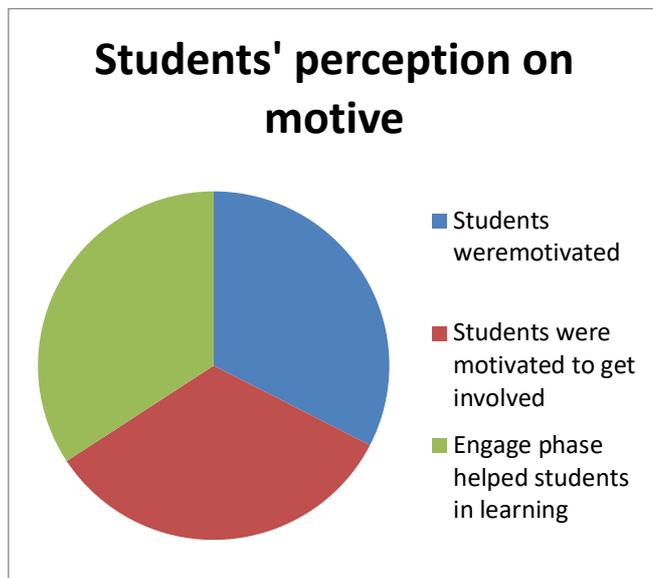


Fig. 1. Students' perception of motive

The next aspect of perception is the question of students' interest in learning with the ESA method. Based on the questionnaire data, as many as 76.92% of students agreed that they were interested in everything taught during learning to write with the ESA method. The next question of interest was whether students liked the learning done by implementing the ESA method, the answers obtained from these questions showed 74, 61% of students or almost all students like learning done by implementing the ESA method. The percentage of students' perceptions of interest can be seen in the following percentage column (Fig.2):

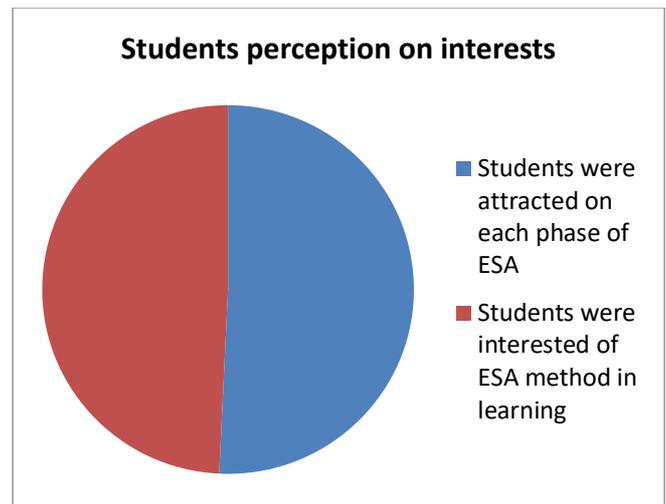


Fig. 2. Students' perception of interests

The next aspect of perception is the question of student expectations. Based on data acquisition, as many as 73.84% of students expect to learn with the ESA method to be applied at every meeting in learning to write. The next question is whether students expect to learn by the ESA method to be applied to other French learning in addition to writing, as many as 76.15% of students agree that the ESA method is applied to learning other French in addition to writing. Percentages of expectations are shown as shown below (Fig. 3):

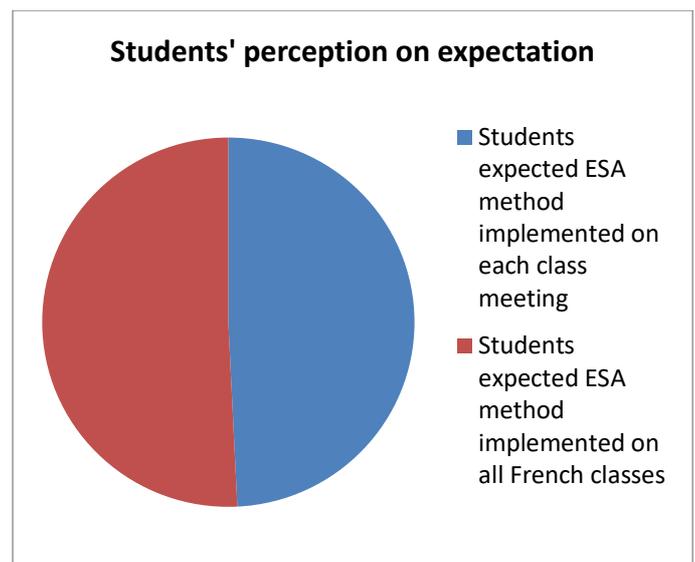


Fig. 3. Students' perception of expectation

The next aspect of perception is the question of student attitudes during learning. Based on the results of the data acquisition, as much as 68.46% of students asked questions when there were unclear or poorly understood explanations during the learning process using the ESA method. The question of the next attitude is whether students participate in each phase of the ESA method, based on data acquisition, 75.38% of students claimed that they participated in each phase of the ESA method during the learning process. Then, for the question of whether students are cooperative during the learning with the

ESA method, 74.61% of students claimed that they were cooperative during the learning with the ESA method. Then, 67.69% of students claimed that they only acted actively in certain phases of learning with the ESA method. The results obtained as can be seen in Figure 4:

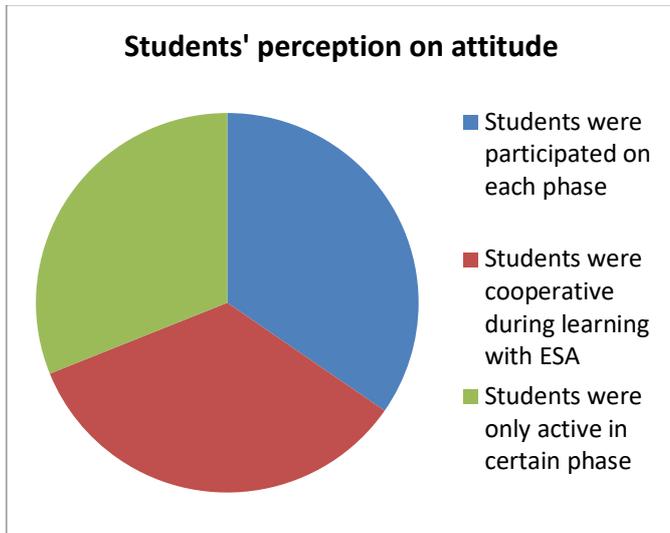


Fig. 4. Students' perception of attitude

The next aspect of perception is knowledge. It was found as many as 77.69% of students agreed that their knowledge of writing descriptive text skills increased with the study phase of the ESA method. The next question is whether students understand the writing skills lessons taught by the ESA method, as much as 77.69% of students understand the writing skills lessons taught by the ESA method. Then, as many as 73.84% of students knew the benefits of learning with the ESA method in improving their descriptive text writing skills. The next question is whether students feel the benefits of learning by the ESA method in improving their writing skills, this question is answered by 79.23% of students who agree that they feel the benefits of learning by the ESA method in improving their descriptive text writing skills. Percentages of knowledge are shown as shown below (Fig. 5):

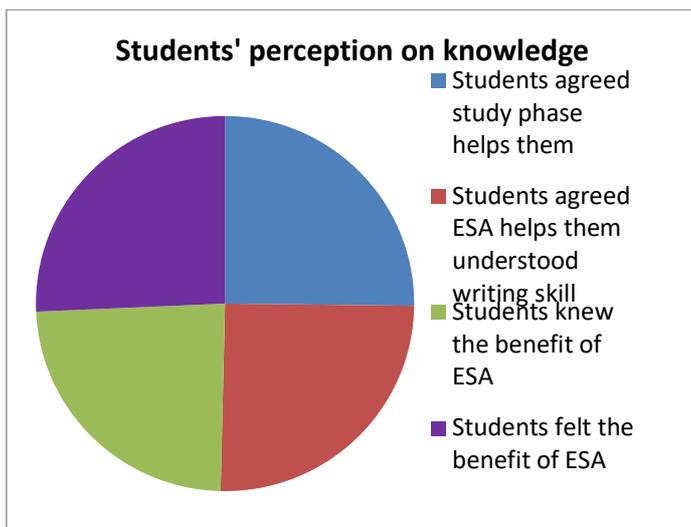


Fig. 5. Students' perception of knowledge

The next aspect is about students' experience. Based on data acquisition, as many as 76.92% of students think that learning with the ESA method creates a pleasant experience for them. Then, 96.15% or almost all students think that learning the skills of writing descriptive text using the ESA method becomes easier. Finally, as many as 70.76% of students thought that their experiences in learning with the ESA method made the learning situation conducive. Percentages of experience are shown as shown below (Fig. 6):

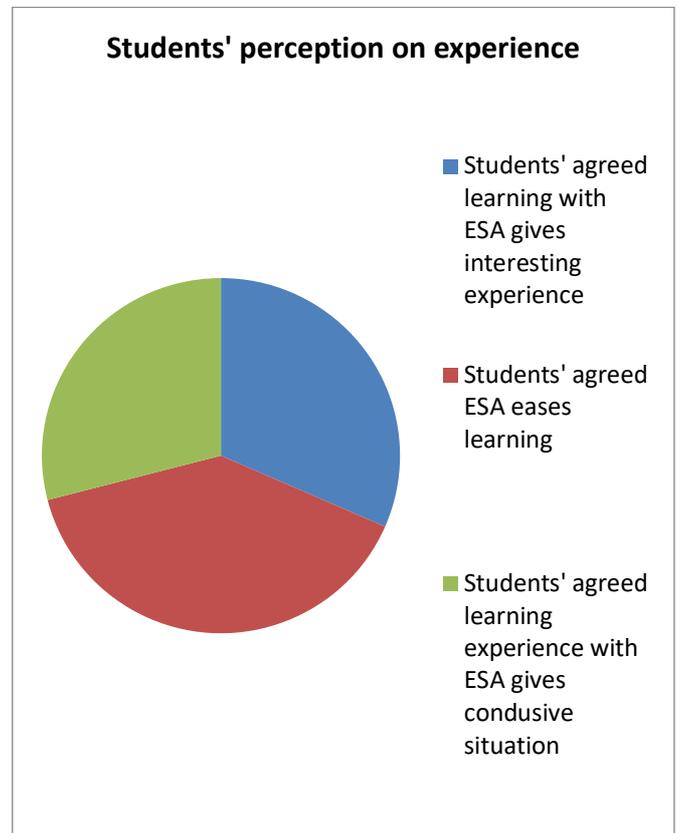


Fig. 6. Students' perception of experience

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the analyzed quantitative data, the students' mean score on writing descriptive text improved by using the ESA method. The effect of ESA method can be seen from each phase. The engage phase made students interested and keep motivated to write, then the study phase made students learn well about the information needed, and the activate phase which honed their writing skills as communicative as possible. The ESA method worked effectively to help students' learn in language classes, as stated by Harjali and Hidayah (2017). In analyzed students' perception through ESA method showed that almost of all students' agreed that ESA method is helpful to arise students' interest in learning writing skill, pushing students' to actively participate during learning, giving them pleasant experience on learning with ESA method, and effectively improve students' writing skill.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to express our gratitude and thanks to Department of French Language, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia and its students for helpful contribution, information, and encouragement during this study. We pray that God bless each and everybody in different capacities.

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