In many cases participatory design workshops in architectural/urban design are conducted based on the assumption that all the participants can share the common natural language on the same level. This writing illustrates the difference between text-based communication and sketch-based communication in architecture/urban design process. To create the new workshop method that enables participants who do not speak the common natural language amongst them, alternative communication tools without natural languages, such as drawings or body languages, are sought. In this writing, I will report the result of the experiment that evaluates the possibility of drawings as a communication tool in the participatory design workshops. The experiment adopts Brain Writing (BW) in order to compare the communication capability between natural languages and drawings. BW is used in the student project that designs the architecture and landscape in a residential area.

Using BW, the experiment evaluates the difference of the communication between natural languages and drawings. In the experiment the participants are divided into 2 groups: group A writes texts and group B draws sketches in BW. The theme of the BW is the first image sharing of future architectural design, right after the first fieldwork at the project site. During BW participants are announced to avoid speaking so the BW is the only communication tool among the group members. Figure 2 shows the samples of BW work.

Gathering BW papers, the difference between text-based communication and sketch-based communication is analysed. The method of analysis is coding, which applies different types of codes to the texts and sketches, depending on the type of information illustrated on the paper. The types of codes are shown in Table 1.

The result shows the differences between text-based communication and sketch-based communication in terms of the types and amount of information communicated. The process of thinking, such as KW, IN and EV are more shared in text-based communication than sketch-based communication. On the other hand, sketch-based communication can easily share the result of the thinking, such as AH, AS compared to text-based communication.