

## **Guided Writing to Improve the Students' Writing Ability of Junior High School Students**

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### ***Abstract***

*The problems of writing are found at MTs Almuna Samarinda; the students are reluctant to write English, they are difficult to express their ideas and thought to the paragraph writing, they made many grammatical mistakes in their writing, and they are also lack of vocabulary in their writing so that it made their writing monoton. This is a classroom action research which aimed at improving the students' writing ability of madrasah students. The setting of the research is the second grade students of MTs Almuna Samarinda. The instruments of the study are observation and writing test. The result of study shows that Guided writing can overcome the problems in the teaching of writing found at MTs Almuna Samarinda. It was found that in preliminary study, there were 14 students (50%) who achieved minimum passing grade and there were 14 students (50%) of the students who did not pass the minimum passing grade, the highest score was 80 and the lowest score was 50. In Cycle 1, there were 18 students (64%) who achieved minimum passing grade and there were 10 students (36%) of the students who did not pass the minimum passing grade, the highest score was 80 and the lowest score was 55. This cycle was not successful because it did not reach the criteria of success, 70. In Cycle 2, there were 22 students (79%) who achieved minimum passing grade and there were 6 students (21%) of the students who did not pass the minimum passing grade, the highest score was 90 and the lowest score was 60. This cycle was successful because it reached the criteria of success.*

**Key-words:** *writing, guided writing, CAR*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

English is used as a tool for communication in many aspect of people entire the world, including in Indonesia. Many experts claim that English, particularly in Asia, is not merely as a foreign language in many parts of the world, but it becomes a lingua franca language. A key reason, of course, for the use of English as an Asian lingua franca is its use as the world's lingua franca. Both roles are likely to continue expanding: in the air, by sea, in the media, in telecommunications, and so forth (McArthur, 2002). This situation brings a consequence that mastering English is a pivotal.

Entering the Asian free market era, the Indonesian government encourages the Indonesian to learn English starting from elementary to higher education level. English is not only taught as an independent subject in the school, but it also adopted into some Indonesian words in terms of borrowing language. McArthur (2002) stated that In Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, and Indonesia, English is significant as a lingua franca at all social levels, and in Malaysia and Indonesia the vocabulary of English formally serves as a source for government-created technical and other terms to be used in Bahasa Malaysia and Bahasa Indonesia, the standard varieties of Malay in each country.

Indonesian government realizes that the appropriate policy, in the context of learning English, will determine the achievement of the English learning for the students. The successful teaching does not only depend on the teacher and the students, but it also to the government policy. Marcellino (2008) proposed that the success of English teaching in Indonesia cannot be freed from the students' cultural backgrounds, values, customs, and beliefs as well as the political standpoint of the government regarding this foreign language.

English is taught in junior high school as a compulsory subject. The students learn all basic components and English skills. The English skills are learnt by students including listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Writing is one of the English skills learnt by the students. Huy (2015) states that writing is a complex metacognitive activity that draws on an individual's knowledge, basic skill, strategies, and ability to coordinate multiple processes. In addition, Huy claims that writing is one of the ways to transmit thoughts or ideas to the other people. Writing is also the important skill in studying English (Zuhri Dj & Sukarnianti, 2015), which need great investment from the students. Many students in high school do not know the important of writing, so they only spend a few times for it. It is not true because good at writing can help them study other skills in English more effectively.

Writing is considered the most difficult and complicated language skill to be learned compared to other language skills (Irawati, 2015). Nunan (1999) claimed that learning to write fluently and expressively is the most difficult of four language skills for all students whether it is for first, second or foreign language students. Nunan highlighted that the most difficult thing to do in learning a foreign language is probably in producing a coherent, fluent, and extended piece of writing.

The English teachers need to teach writing to the students. Harmer (1998) argues that some reasons for teaching writing to the students of English as a foreign language include reinforcement, language development, learning style, and writing as a basic language skill. This means that in order to have a writing skill, student should write they should have the ability to process the ideas to read (Ariyanti, 2016). In addition, Raimes (1983) states that teaching writing helps students learn to use language.

Teaching and learning writing is pivotal. Based on the Indonesia national curriculum, it is stated that the competence standard of writing of Junior High School level is to express meaning in functional written texts and simple short essays in the form of descriptive, procedure, narrative, recount, and report to interact with both the closer environment and the context of daily life. As one of the productive skill, learning writing is important for English learners, particularly junior high school students.

In fact, the teaching and learning is not always satisfied. Many problems are found in the teaching and learning of writing. The problems are also found at MTs Almuna Samarinda; the students are reluctant to write English, they are difficult to express their ideas and thought to the paragraph writing, they made many grammatical mistakes in their writing, and they are also lack of vocabulary in their writing so that it made their writing monoton.

The problems of writing are also claimed by many researchers. One of the problems in the teaching of writing is reluctant writers. Hawthorne (2008) stated that teachers of English are likely to be familiar with the term 'reluctant reader' and to have read about such students in their attempts to better understand the reasons for reluctance and how these students' needs can best be addressed in their English programs. In his dissertation, Hawthorne found that teachers of reluctant writers are alert to the interactions between the cognitive, behavioural and affective aspects of writing.

Some other problems found in the teaching and learning of writing are: writing problems include they lack ideas, organizing of ideas, rhetoric or pattern of thought, cohesion and coherence (Nurhayati, 2016), students were able to make thesis statement that showed their opinion, but unable to develop the essay well (Setyowati, 2016), many students made a lot of mistakes in writing English, especially in using preposition and verb tenses and grammar structures (Huy, 2015), and low achievers were still confused in identifying the schematic structure of descriptive text and English Grammar (Siahaan, 2013).

To overcome the problems of writing, it should be implemented more appropriate teaching techniques to teach writing to the junior high school students. One of the techniques is guided writing. Juriah (2015) states that guided writing is an individual or group activity where learners use word maps to organize their ideas and write texts. A word map is a diagram used in guided writing to help writers organize their ideas. Hartanti (2011) explains that guided writing allows a teacher to work closely with a

small group of students based on a common need. During a guided writing lesson, a teacher might gather a small group and model writing, or maybe they will complete a shared writing experience together. Dyan (2010) added that guided writing is a writing process guided by the teacher limited to structuring sentences, direct answers to questions and language-based exercises which concentrated on vocabulary building, reading comprehension, grammar, and even oral skills that culminates in a piece of writing to build students' writing skill.

Hartanti (2011) claims that guided writing is useful for a range of teaching purposes. It allows students to consider audience, purpose, topic, selection of text type, when planning their writing. It allows writers to focus on conventions such as spelling, punctuation, standard usage, and handwriting. It also may be used to encourage students to revise and edit their writing. The focus for each session could be on one of the 'authorial' aspects of writing, such as clarifying and extending ideas or organizing and planning the structure of a text.

## **2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This section will describe how the research was conducted, including: research design, research setting, research instrument, data collection techniques, and data analysis techniques.

The design of the study is classroom action research (CAR). CAR is a kind of research which aims at improving the teaching and learning quality. The objective of the implementation of classroom action research is to solve the problem found in the classroom setting as well as to improve the quality of teaching and learning process (Fauzan, 2014; Fauzan, 2016). This research was conducted at MTs Almuna Samarinda. The subject of this research was the second grade students of MTs Almuna Samarinda. The subject was chosen because the researcher found the teaching problem of writing at the second grade students of MTs Almuna.

The instruments used in this study were observation and writing test. The observation was used to record the data about teaching and learning process of writing implemented in the second grade students through guided writing. The test was used to record the data about the students' achievement in learning writing. The test was used to see the progress of the teaching and learning quality in the classroom. Data were collected by using the instruments. The observation sheet was used while the teacher implemented guided writing in the teaching of writing. The writing test was applied in the end of cycle. There were two cycles in this study. Each cycle consisted of three meetings for the implementation of guided writing and one meeting for conducting test. The data, then, were analyzed descriptively and statistically. The data taken from observation was analyzed descriptively. Meanwhile, the data from writing test was counted statistically to determine the mean score.

### 3. FINDINGS

This section provides the findings of the implementation of guided writing in the research of cycle 1 and cycle 2. The data presented below.

#### 3.1 Findings of the Research of Cycle 1

The research findings in cycle 1 covers: (a) the result of observation toward the students' participation during the teaching and learning process of writing in three meetings of the cycle 1 and (b) the results of the students' writing achievement in cycle 1.

##### 3.1.1 The Implementation of Teaching Learning Process

There were three meeting in this cycle. The topic in cycle 1 was about "*When I was a child*". It was taken from the sub lesson in semester 2 for the junior high school students.

The first meeting was focused on the introduction of the teaching writing using guided writing. The teacher entered the class and greeted the students. The teacher checked the students' presence list. No students was absent in that day. After that, the teacher explained the instructional objectives that class would achieve. She told the students that they were going to discuss about "*When I was a child*" in terms of writing. So, the students would learn how to write a simple paragraph. The teacher taught the students simple past sentences and writing by giving the example of writing in term of guided writing. She took the example of writing from junior high school entitled "*When English rings a bell*"

She wrote in the whiteboard:

*This is me when I was a baby. I was three point four kilograms and fifty two centimeters long. Now I am fifty kilograms and one hundred fifty centimeters tall. I was bald. I had no hair. Now I have long hair.* (When English rings a bell, 2014)

The teacher, then, explained how to write in English by asking the students copy and rewrite the English writing made by the teacher. The students, then, practiced making a writing based on the teacher's guidance. Then, the teacher closed the class by giving evaluation to the students.

In the second meeting of the implementation of guided writing in the teaching of writing, the teacher gave the topic about unpleasant memories when the students were children. The unpleasant memories could be about the students' sickness, loneliness, bad memories or other things. The teacher started by writing in the whiteboard three sentences taken from the English textbook for junior high school entitled "*When English rings a bell*".

She wrote:

*He is sick. He **caught** the flu yesterday. He **walked** home when it was **raining** hard.* (When English rings a bell, 2014)

In this meeting, the teacher led the students copy and write the sentences. The teacher guided the students explore the students' experience of the bad memories when they were children. The teacher encouraged the students write English based on those experiences. In that meeting, the teacher explored more about the students' ability in writing based on the students' experiences. Of course, it is not very easy. It is very difficult. The students were still confused how to write. They are lack of vocabulary and grammatical knowledge. The teachers should explained more about grammar, particularly about past tense, and about how to make a writing.

The third meeting was conducted as a closing meeting for the first cycle. In this meeting the teacher taught how to write about past activities in topic of "*When I was a child*". After exploring the students' knowledge about the previous meeting, then, the teacher wrote some sentences to be copied by the students taken from the English textbook for junior high school entitled "*When English rings a bell*".

*This is me and this is Rani in Grade VII. We **were** not close friends at that time. We **did not study** together. We never **played** together. Now we **are** best friends. We **study** together, **play** together, and **cry** together, too.* (When English rings a bell, 2014)

In this meeting, some students could write about related topic into their own writing. The students wrote about their good or best friend when they were children. They mentioned some names, and what they did in the past. This meeting showed an improvement of the students' writing. Some students could make a writing, but some others did not.

### **3.1.2 The Students' Writing Achievement**

The preliminary study indicated that most students' writing ability were low. The students are reluctant to write English, they are difficult to express their ideas and thought to the paragraph writing, they made many grammatical mistakes in their writing, and they are also lack of vocabulary in their writing. To measure the students' writing development, the teacher conducted a writing test.

In Preliminary study, there were 14 students (50%) who achieved minimum passing grade and there were 14 students (50%) of the students who did not pass the minimum passing grade, the highest score was 80 and the lowest score was 50. In Cycle 1, there were 18 students (64%) who achieved minimum passing grade and there were 10 students (36%) of the students who did not pass the minimum passing grade, the highest score was 80 and the lowest score was 55. This cycle was not successful because it did not reach the criteria of success, 70.

### 3.1.3 Reflection of Cycle 1

From the findings of the teaching and learning process and the Students' writing mastery in the first cycle, the implementation of guided writing did not yet give satisfactory result on the improvement of the students' writing achievement. The students' score were not fully active in teaching and learning process as revealed by the observation. There were 18 students (64%) who achieved minimum passing grade and there were 10 students (36%) of the students who did not pass the minimum passing grade, the highest score was 80 and the lowest score was 55. This cycle was not successful because it did not reach the criteria of success.

Considering the unsatisfactory performance mentioned above, the teacher decided to continue the action to the second cycle. Some adjustments were made to improve the implementation of guided writing in cycle 2. There were:

1. Simplify the topic about past even from child into teenagers.
2. Connect topic of writing talking about the things that the students love, like hobbies
3. Give more examples write English sentence / paragraph;

## 3.2 Findings of the Research of Cycle 2

This section presents the data gained in the second cycle. It included the teaching and learning process of writing in three meetings of the second cycle and the result of the students' writing mastery.

### 3.2.1 The Implementation of Teaching Learning Process

The topic in cycle 2 was still same like in cycle 1 about "*When I was a child*". The teaching of writing in cycle 2 using the same technique, that is guided writing with some adjustment of it, they are: simplify the topic about past even from child into teenagers, connect topic of writing talking about the things that the students love, and give more examples write English sentence / paragraph.

The first meeting of Cycle 2 was done to introduce and to strengthen the students' knowledge and ability to write. The teacher opened the class as introductory action of the first meeting. After opening the teaching and learning process, the teacher checked the students' presence. Then, she described the instructional objectives that would be taught.

In this meeting, the topic of the meeting was *When I was a child* and the sub topic was "*my favorite games*". The teacher wrote a paragraph as guidance to the students taken from the teacher's textbook entitled "*When English rings a bell*".

*They are playing marbles. It was my favorite game in primary school. I played marbles everyday. But now I never play marbles anymore. I have*

*so many things to do at home and at school. Did you play marbles too.*  
(When English rings a bell, 2014)

The students wrote a paragraph about their favorite game in the past. Before finishing the lesson, the teacher asked the students express their feeling related to what they had learnt in term of written task. Then, she gave feedbacks and comments to the students.

The second meeting was conducted in more interactive teaching and learning. As soon as the teacher entered the class, she greeted the students and opened the lesson. To begin the main activity, the teacher asked the students about their works in the previous meeting and the students' past activities. She led them review the activities they did in the previous section.

In this meeting, the topic of the meeting was *When I was a child* and the sub topic was "*my favorite subject*". The teacher wrote a paragraph as guidance to the students taken from the teacher's text-book entitled "*When English rings a bell*".

*I did not like Math because the teacher did not explain it clearly. But now it is my favorite subject because Mr. Sihombing explains it clearly.*  
(When English rings a bell, 2014)

The teacher gave less guidance to the students make writing. Almost all the students made writing in their book and finished work on time. The students were able to spell the vocabulary about the subject they liked. They could express their ideas about the subject they liked last year and last semester.

In the third meeting of cycle 2, the teacher began the lesson by asking some brief questions to stimulate the students' attention to the main activity. In this meeting, the topic of the meeting was *When I was a child* and the sub topic was "*my hobbies*". The teacher wrote a paragraph as guidance to the students taken from the teacher's text-book entitled "*When English rings a bell*".

*They are toy cars. I collected them when I was in elementary school. I do not collect toy cars now. I'm going to give them to Ucok, my younger cousin.* (When English rings a bell, 2014)

In this meeting, the teacher gave less guidance to students, she focused to the passive students. The students only made few mistake in their writing. They could express their ideas and thought to the paragraph writing, they made few grammatical mistakes in their writing, and they used vocabulary that they seldom used in their writing.

### **3.2.2 The Students' Writing Achievement**

This first cycle was not successful because it did not reach the criteria of success. Then, the researcher continued to cycle 2. To measure the students' writing development, the teacher conducted a writing test.

In Cycle 2, there were 22 students (79%) who achieved minimum passing grade and there were 6 students (21%) of the students who did not pass the minimum passing grade, the highest score was 90 and the lowest score was 60. This cycle was successful because it reached the criteria of success, 70.

### **3.2.3 Reflection of Cycle 2**

Based on the results of the analysis of both teaching and learning process and the student' writing scores in Cycle 2, it could be inferred that guided writing could improve the students' writing achievement of the students. This can be examined from the criteria of success defined in this study.

The overall evaluation of the implementation of guided writing in the teaching of writing is presented in table 3 below.

**Table 3: The Comparison of the Students' Writing Score of Cycle 1 and 2**

| <b>Description</b> | <b>SCORE</b>       |                |                |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|----------------|
|                    | <b>Preliminary</b> | <b>Cycle 1</b> | <b>Cycle 2</b> |
| Mean               | 66.96              | 69.64          | 75.00          |
| Max                | 80                 | 80             | 90             |
| Min                | 50                 | 55             | 60             |
| Passed             | 14 students        | 18 students    | 22 students    |
| Percentage         | 50%                | 64%            | 79%            |

Table 3 shows that in Preliminary study, there were 14 students (50%) who achieved minimum passing grade and there were 14 students (50%) of the students who did not pass the minimum passing grade, the highest score was 80 and the lowest score was 50.

In Cycle 1, there were 18 students (64%) who achieved minimum passing grade and there were 10 students (36%) of the students who did not pass the minimum passing grade, the highest score was 80 and the lowest score was 55. This cycle was not successful because it did not reach the criteria of success, 70.

In Cycle 2, there were 22 students (79%) who achieved minimum passing grade and there were 6 students (21%) of the students who did not pass the minimum passing grade, the highest score was 90 and the lowest score was 60. This cycle was successful because it reached the criteria of success.

There was an improvement of the students' achievement in this cycle. The key of it might be because some adjustments were made to improve the implementation of guided writing in cycle 2. There were: simplify the topic about past even from child into teenagers, connect topic of writing talking about the things that the students love, like hobbies, and give more examples write English sentence / paragraph.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

This study was done to overcome the problems in the teaching of writing found at MTs Almuna Samarinda. The problems were the students are reluctant to write English, they are difficult to express their ideas and thought to the paragraph writing, they made many grammatical mistakes in their writing, and they are also lack of vocabulary in their writing. To overcome the problem, the researcher implemented guided writing in the teaching of writing.

The finding of the research shows there was an improvement to the students' writing ability as well as the quality of teaching atmosphere from cycle 1 to cycle 2. The improvement to the students' achievement can be seen in diagram 1 below.

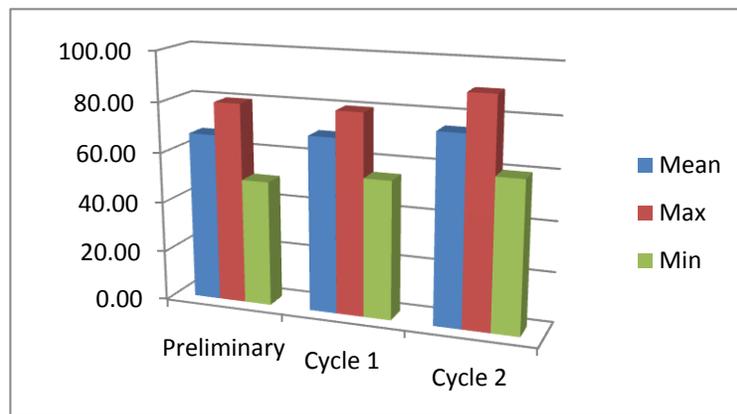


Diagram 1: The Comparison of the Students' Writing Score

The diagram shows there was an improvement of the students' ability of writing from preliminary study, cycle 1, and cycle 2. The key of the improvement because of the adjustments made to improve the implementation of guided writing in cycle 2, they were: simplify the topic about past even from child into teenagers, connect topic of writing talking about the things that the students love, like hobbies, and give more examples write English sentence / paragraph.

This finding confirms the findings of other researchers related to the implementation of guided writing in the teaching of writing; teaching writing by using guided writing technique can improve students' writing skill (Hartanti, 2011) and through guided writing, the students showed great interest to be actively involved and participating in the teaching and learning process (Dyan, 2010).

## 5. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion from previous section, the researcher draws conclusion as follows.

Guided writing can overcome the problems in the teaching of writing found at MTs Almuna Samarinda. It was found that in preliminary study, there were 14 students (50%) who achieved minimum passing grade and there were 14 students (50%) of the students who did not pass the minimum passing grade, the highest score was 80 and the lowest score was 50. In Cycle 1, there were 18 students (64%) who achieved minimum passing grade and there were 10 students (36%) of the students who did not pass the minimum passing grade, the highest score was 80 and the lowest score was 55. This cycle was not successful because it did not reach the criteria of success, 70. In Cycle 2, there were 22 students (79%) who achieved minimum passing grade and there were 6 students (21%) of the students who did not pass the minimum passing grade, the highest score was 90 and the lowest score was 60. This cycle was successful because it reached the criteria of success.

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