

IMPROVING STUDENTS' WRITING SKILL BY USING GUIDED WRITING

Yeny Aryningtyas*, Gunarso Susilohadi, Teguh Sarosa

English Education Study Program
Sebelas Maret University Surakarta

Email: yenyaryn@yahoo.co.id

Abstract: This research aims at identifying whether guided writing can improve students' writing skill and students' learning motivation. This action research was conducted in two cycles at the second grade of SMP Negeri 1 Karanganyar from August – October 2012. The qualitative and quantitative data were collected through observation, interview, questionnaire, field note, photographs and tests (pre-test and post-tests). The qualitative data were analyzed in five stages namely assembling the data, coding the data, comparing the data, building interpretations, and reporting the outcomes. Meanwhile, the quantitative data were analyzed by comparing the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test. The research findings show that the use of guided writing could improve students' writing skill and students' learning motivation.

Key Words: Writing, Guided Writing

Based on the writing syllabus, the second grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Karanganyar must acquire several competences. One of the competences is to express the ideas in the form of a short functional text in the descriptive, recount, and narrative text. In order to fulfill the competences there are several requirements that they must get. The first requirement is they are able to use grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. The second requirement is they are able to organize and elaborate their main ideas. The third requirement is making draft, revising, editing, and finally producing a short functional text. Based on the pre-research data, there were some writing skill problems faced by the students. The problems were indicated by two indicators. The first indicator was related to the students' writing skills. The problems in writing skills included: students got difficulties to use the correct and appropriate grammar; students got

difficulties to construct their idea to the cohesive and coherent paragraph; students often did mechanical mistakes; students' vocabulary mastery was low; and students got difficulties to formulate their own idea of writing.

In addition, the second indicator was related to the students' learning motivation. The problems which arise in the students' learning motivation included: students did their own business in the class, like using mobile phone, chatting with their friends, etc; students were not brave enough to express their idea since they were making mistakes; only few students were active during writing class; students were not giving attention for their writing; students preferred to have the writing assignment as homework.

The main cause of the students' problems which were indicated above, they were related to the method of learning process delivered by the teacher. Based on

the observation, the teacher used conventional techniques to teach those students. The teacher gave the exercises from the material book, and then the students were asked to do those exercises. Therefore, the teaching learning process became monotonous and boring. It occurred because of the learning resources that the teacher used, were not varied; the teacher only used the material from the book. The teacher also tended to give the students task of making writing composition as homework to measure the students ability since writing activity spends much time in the class.

To solve the problems stated above, the researcher decided to use a technique to solve the problems. Guided writing is needed to use as the method in teaching writing. According to Reid (1993:25) guided writing is free writing limited to structuring sentences, often in direct answer to questions, the result of which looked like a short piece of discourse, usually a paragraph. Moreover, the exercises were language based; they usually concentrated on vocabulary building, reading comprehension, grammar, and even oral skills that culminate in piece of writing.

Reid (1993: 25) also classifies the typical processes of guided writing

exercises in widely used textbooks includes: 1) Model Paragraph; at the beginning, teacher provides a short text as a model paragraph and briefly explains how a text can be used as a model for writing; teacher can find a suitable text and copied into worksheet. 2) Comprehension Questions; teacher may asks a series of questions based on the model paragraph, include the basis information of the content paragraph. 3) Vocabulary; teacher may give a series of exercises which focus on vocabulary building related to the text. 4) Oral Composition; teacher can build up an outline which is written on the board as a basis for students' writing. 5) Written Composition; after giving model paragraph until oral composition, students can write their paragraph based on the topic of model paragraph given by teacher.

In term of evaluation, the researcher used the analytic scoring in evaluating students' writing. She used the Composition Profile in *Testing ESL Writing: A Practical Approach* introduces by H. Jacob in Reid (1993: 236-237) as the analytical scales for ESL writing which becomes the most widely used. The ESL composition profile can be seen in the table 1.

Table 1. Analytical Scales for ESL Writing

Categories	Level	Comments
Content	30-27	Good development of students' writing and relevant to assigned topic
	26-22	Limited development of students' writing, most relevant to the topic but lacks detail
	21-17	Limited knowledge of subject and minimally focused on the topic
	16-13	Ideas are unclear
Organization	20-18	Ideas clearly stated and well organized, satisfactory use of cohesion
	17-14	Loosely organized but main ideas stand out, somewhat copy
	13-10	Lack of logical sequencing and development of ideas
	9-7	Does not communicate, no organization
Vocabulary	20-18	Use a variety of vocabulary and idiomatic expression
	17-14	Varies vocabulary and expression, but makes occasional errors in word choice

	13-10	Use limited vocabulary with frequent errors
	9-7	Have many errors in vocabulary usage, even at the basic level
Language Use	25-22	Use some effective complex grammar structures with few errors of agreement
	21-18	Use effective complex sentences with several errors of agreement
	17-11	Use simple sentence in frequent errors in tense, agreement and meaning is confused
	10-5	Use simple sentences dominated with errors
Mechanics	5	Use good accuracy in punctuation, capitalization, and spelling
	4	Occasionally errors in punctuation, capitalization, and spelling
	3	Frequent errors in punctuation, capitalization, and spelling
	2	Dominated errors in punctuation, capitalization, and spelling

Motivation is also related to the writing activity in this research. Motivation is a factor which affects the students' interest in joining the class. Students can learn something by a certain way in joining the lesson if they are motivated. The teacher must be able to encourage the students' motivation in the class. According to Elliot, et al (2000: 332) motivation is an important psychological construct that affects learning and performance in at least four ways: 1) Motivation increases an individual's energy and activity level. 2) Motivation directs an individual toward goals. 3) Motivation promotes initiation of certain activities and persistence in those activities. 4) Motivation affects the learning strategies and cognitive processes an individual employ.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used in this study is a classroom action research. It was firstly derived from the problems in which most of second grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Karanganyar had difficulty in composing text. That is the reason for the researcher conducted the action research to solve the problems which stated in introduction.

According to Wallace (1998: 4), action research is done by systematically collect data on teacher or researcher

everyday practice and analyzes it in order to come to some decision about what the teacher future practice should be. As defined by Mills (2000: 6), an action research is any systematic inquiry conducted by the teachers, researchers, principles, school counselors, or other stakeholders in the teaching learning environment, to gather information about the ways that their particular schools operate, how they teach, and how well their students learn. It means that action research is conducted to make something better than before in learning process. It can be done by the teacher or researcher to get the improvement after the teacher or researcher conducted.

According to the model, the implementation of action research includes four steps. There are as follows: 1) Planning the action. 2) Implementing the plan. 3) Observing the effect of the action. 4) Reflecting the result of observation as basis for further planning.

There are two kinds of data collected in this research: qualitative and qualitative data. Qualitative data were taken from: observation, interview, and questionnaire. Meanwhile, quantitative data was taken from test (pre-test and post-test).

There were two kinds of techniques in analyzing the data. They are descriptive

statistic and constant comparative method. Descriptive statistic method was used to analyze the quantitative data. The data contained of the students' scores. The scores were taken from pre-test and post-test score. If the average scores of pre-test are less than pre-test, it indicates that teaching strategy did not influence the students' competence. Meanwhile, constant comparative method was used to analyze the qualitative data. This method suggested by Mc Kernan (1996) in Burns (1999: 156-160) which consists of five steps: a) assembling the data; b) coding the data; c) comparing the data; d) building interpretations; e) reporting the outcomes.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The researcher conducted pre-research in class VIII F of SMP Negeri 1 Karanganyar to know the condition of teaching and learning process English before the action. From the pre-research data, the researcher found some problems in writing skill. The problems faced by students included developing the ideas, organizing text coherently, using appropriate vocabulary in sentence,

spelling, and constructing the grammatically correct sentence. Besides, the questionnaire and interview data showed that the students' motivation in writing skill were still low. The students did not pay their attention in writing. They preferred doing the writing activity as homework to do it in class. Moreover, the problem might be caused by the teacher. The teacher did not have adequate time, models and practices to write. He tended to give the students task in writing activity as homework since the writing activity spend much time in the class. He also often gave the practices in reading skill. Besides, the teacher only focused on active students but for the rest the teacher less in monitoring students' writing.

After identifying the problems, the researcher conducted the pre-test to know the students' writing skill especially in recount text. The mean score of pre-test was 63.80. It was below of the passing grade for English lesson in SMP Negeri 1 Karanganyar which was 80.00. In addition, the details of students' mean score of writing aspects is presented in table 2.

Table 2. Writing Aspect Mean Score of Pre-Test

No.	Aspects of Writing	Mean Score of Pre-Test	KKM
1.	Content	20.20	24.00
2.	Organization	13.85	16.00
3.	Vocabulary	13.00	16.00
4.	Language Use	13.20	20.00
5.	Mechanics	3.65	4.00

From the table of writing aspect mean score above, the researcher found some problems of pre-research which were

related to the table above. The problems are presented in table 3 below.

Table 3. The Problems of Pre-Research

The Problems of Pre-Research

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1. The students got difficulties to use the correct and appropriate grammar in past form.
 2. The students made few supporting details information on their paragraph.
 3. The students got difficulties to construct their idea to the cohesive and coherent paragraph.
 4. The students often did mechanical mistakes.
 5. Students' vocabularies did not vary. They often repeat the same vocabulary.
 6. The students got difficulties to formulate their idea in writing.
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After finding the writing problems from pre-research data, the researcher made a plan to teach writing skill in cycle 1. The materials were prepared from the relevant books and also internet. The lesson plan was planned for three meetings in cycle 1.

In the first meeting, the researcher focused on content, organization, and vocabulary aspects of writing. She prepared a jumble paragraph entitle "A tour to the Botanic Gardens by Nida". The researcher asked students to work in pairs to arrange the jumble text into a good recount text with the researcher's guidance (table 3, number 3). Still with their partner, the students were asked to answer the questions which related to the text. The questions were used to check the students' understanding about the information of text (table 3 number 2). After that, the researcher checked the vocabularies of students which related to the topic (table 3, number 5).

In the second meeting, the researcher reviewed about the language features and generic structure of recount text. Then, the researcher discussed the homework with the students. The homework was about to correct the spelling, punctuation, capitalization, in a recount text and also the use of grammatical form in past tense (table 3, number 1, and 4). After that, the researcher gave the exercise about recount text. She asked to write the series of events which were written in recount text (table 3, number 3).

Then, the researcher asked about vocabularies which were related to the topic (table 3, number 5).

The third meeting, the researcher reviewed again the materials about recount text and past tense. In this case, the researcher focused on language use aspect of writing. The researcher asked students to work in pairs to do the exercise about simple past tense (table 3, number 1). She asked to write the students' experience which happened at school (table 3, number 6). The fourth meeting was the first post-test. In the first post-test, students had to write a recount text about their experience at school which happened to them.

After analyzing the observation and the tests result in the first cycle, the researcher did reflection in order to evaluate the teaching and learning process. She found that there were students' progresses in writing skill. The observation result showed that there were some improvements achieved after doing the action. In this cycle one, the mean score of the students was increasing. It could be seen by comparing the result of the post test 1 (78.60) and pre-test (63.80).

The improvements of students' mean score was not only of students' writing skill but also the students' motivation toward writing itself. In the first meeting, the situation of class was still noisy. The students were still ashamed to state their ideas, but in the next meetings, they began to participate actively by giving their ideas

in asking questions. They were also active in answering the researcher's questions and responding to the researcher's instruction. The students' writing was better than previous meeting. The students could write the longer story than before in a more organized text. After giving the first post-test, the researcher still found one aspect of writing skill below the passing grade. The researcher still found some problems faced by students. The mean score in language use (18.00) was still below the passing grade (20.00). The students still had difficulties in constructing the sentences in past form. In addition, the researcher found that some students were still busy with their activities and conversing with their tablemate.

Dealing with the problems in the first cycle, the researcher revised her plans. The revised plans were used to solve the problems in the first cycle; the students' writing skill and students' motivation. In the first meeting of cycle 2, the researcher focused on language use aspect of writing. The researcher gave the exercise of language use by asking students to write their sentences on the whiteboard using past form. She also prepared the exercise about simple past tense in the students' worksheet. In the second meeting of cycle 2, the researcher more focused on language use and mechanics. The researcher gave the exercise of language use about changing the verbs into past form. She also asked students to rewrite a text which spelling, punctuation, and capitalization were not suitable. The third meeting was about post-test 2. In the third meeting, the students had to write their experience to do or get something in their life. The students were asked to write their experience in three paragraphs.

After analyzing the observation result and the test result in the second cycle,

the researcher did reflection in order to evaluate the teaching and learning process. She found the students' progress in writing ability. The post-test 2 result showed that there were some improvements achieved after doing the action.

The improvements in this cycle were not only the students' writing skill but also of the students' motivation toward writing itself. The result of mean score of post-test 2 which was done at the end of the second cycle was 83.10, it was better than the mean score of post-test 1 was 78.60. In the second cycle, the students' motivation in joining the teaching and learning process was also increase. The students participate actively in the lesson. They gave their idea and asked questions when they found any difficulties. They gave their full attention to the researcher's explanation and instruction. They also responded in every question from the researcher. They were also brave to express their opinion and idea.

To conclude, the research findings showed that the aspects of content in students' writing had improved. The students were able to state the main idea and also find more of details information from their writing. The students could develop and organize their writing nicely than before. By using a guided writing, the students could make an outline which helped them in organizing their writing.

Afterwards, the students' writing was better in coherence and cohesiveness. They used the connection words to make their writing systematic from the beginning until the end of the writing. The idea clearly stated of each paragraph in students' writing. The students also could produce writing in well-organized text.

In this research, the researcher also gave vocabulary list before the students produce the writing. The vocabulary list was related with the topic which discussed

on that day. So that, the students were able to use the appropriate word order in their sentences and used the variant words to express their writing. The students were also asked about the meaning of several words in the text. It aimed to improve students' understanding about the text and to enrich their vocabulary mastery.

Besides, the students could apply the appropriate tense in their writing. In this research, the researcher gave enough opportunity to write; the teaching learning focused more on writing skill. The students could have more practice in constructing the simple past tense; the students were also given an opportunity to make simple past tense on the whiteboard with the researcher's guidance. The research findings also showed that the students were able to apply the appropriate word order in their sentences. It could be seen from the students' writing which has fewer mistakes than before.

The improvement can also be seen from the mechanics aspects. The students were able to demonstrate the convention of writing and minimize the error and mistake of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. The researcher also gave the exercises about correcting misspelling, punctuation, and capitalization. The researcher guided the students in doing the exercises. When the researcher discussed about the mechanics aspect, the students paid attention to the discussion. They shared their opinion and showed their enthusiasm to write their work on the whiteboard. Therefore, in the test result it could be seen that most of them only made fewer mistakes.

Guided writing also helps the students to make their writing more flexible. It can be done in the different ways according to the interests and ability of the class. Doff (1997: 155) states that oral

preparation activity in guided writing makes the activity much more interesting and involves the class more. Moreover, during writing activities, the students receive feedback and advice from the teacher. Problems that arise during the activity of writing are overcome by the teacher.

Finally, the students were more motivated to follow the lesson. The students were also more enthusiastic in following the lesson. By using guided writing as a teaching technique, teacher can control more students' activities during the lesson. Therefore, it can be concluded that guided writing can improve the students' motivation.

Conclusion and Suggestion

Based on the results of students' writing skill, the use of guided writing improved the students' writing skill. It is shown from the increase of students' mean scores of pre-test and post-tests. From the students' mean score improvements, it can be concluded that the students can easily generate the idea and develop their writing. Their writing is also improved from their sentence structure, the choices of appropriate vocabularies, text organization, and the use of correct punctuation and capitalization.

The use of guided writing is able to improve the students' motivation in learning English especially in writing class. The students' motivation toward English writing class got better. The students were interested in participating and taking a part in the lesson. They followed the activities actively in every lesson. Most of them were brave to express their idea in every activity. They gave attention to their writing and showed enthusiasm to do the exercises. They were also brave to ask the teacher when they found the difficulties.

The success of this study will be helpful in the larger teaching-learning world, for that reason it can be drawn some useful suggestion not only for the teachers but also for the students, for further researchers.

The English teacher is advised to manage the situation of class by giving clear instruction using louder sound. Moreover, the teacher is suggested to maintain the seating arrangement to avoid the students' noise in teaching and learning process.

The students are suggested to have high internal motivation when learning English writing. By using the steps in guided writing, the students are trained to compose their written text based on the aspects of writing, include: generating the ideas, the use of correct and appropriate grammar, organize the ideas to the cohesive and coherent paragraph, mechanical aspect, and vocabulary.

This study discusses the use of guided writing as a teaching technique to improve students' writing in junior high school. It is expected that the result of this

study can be conducted in the same research but in different scope of the study such as enlarging the population, sample, and another skills.

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