

ENCOURAGING WRITING SKILL USED ENGLISH DIARY WRITING

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to implement an English diary to encouraging the improvement of students' writing skills. This study was conducted using quantitative methods with quasi-experimental design. The study population consisted of 15 students from the experimental and control classes. The classes were then randomly assigned to the experimental and control classes. The experimental class was taught by applying diary writing, while the control class was taught by applying conventional teaching techniques or without applying diary writing. The study was further conducted by following the procedure: giving a pre-test, implementing the intervention, and giving a posttest. Data were collected through tests and interviews. The test data were then calculated using t-test on SPSS 21 with sig. 5% and the interview data was described. The t-test was conducted by calculating the posttest and the scores obtained in both classes showed that the t value on the posttest (2.094) and the acquisition score (2.703) was higher than the t table (1.667) with df = 70 at the 0.05 significance level. So, the t-test result > t-table which means H₀ (null hypothesis) is rejected and H_a (alternative hypothesis) is accepted. In addition, this finding is also in line with the interview results which show that diary writing is effective, especially in helping students find writing ideas, improve writing fluency, and develop their writing.

Key word; Diary Writing, Writing Skill

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1. INTRODUCTION

Language ability can often be measured through writing skills. Writing is often considered less important than other skills such as speaking and reading, because it is less immediately visible. However, despite this, writing is still considered very useful because a lot of knowledge is gained through writing. A person's writing ability is seen as a special skill because it can transform abstract ideas or concepts into concrete written forms.

Writing skills mean conveying opinions, ideas, thoughts and facts, by writing clearly and can be understood by the reader. Good writing should have good vocabulary, correct grammar and spelling, and perfect punctuation. Through writing, students can share or inform stories, ideas, or thoughts to others in written text that can be read by anyone. Kurniaman et al. (2018) and McCardle & Connelly (2018) stated that writing skills are the most challenging language skills to master compared to other language skills. There are

many aspects that need to be mastered, such as organization, mechanics, fluency, and grammar. Writing does not only produce words and sentences, but in writing activities students must be able to combine words and grammatically into written sentence text.

Most students don't really like and are interested in writing. Most students also have problems in writing, therefore it is very important to develop writing skills. When interviewing one of the students, the main reason they had difficulty in writing texts was because they thought they had nothing to write and when they got ideas about what to write, they lacked comprehension, grammar and proper organization of sentences. So their ideas cannot be conveyed well. Because of these problems, researchers thought of a way for students to practice writing, namely by using English Diary Writing. Writing an English diary can be used as a daily activity and students can write anything in the diary.

According to Perk (2015), writing is a productive activity that involves the production and processing of various knowledge in appropriate language aspects. Writing is an important skill for language learners because it helps them develop communication skills and improve vocabulary and sentence structure. Writing is a process that involves finding, organizing, and putting ideas down on paper, and then re-drafting and revising them to make them better. This is a challenging skill that requires a lot of practice and extensive language exposure in order for students to develop strong writing skills.

In this case, writing a diary in English is one way to make students enjoy writing activities because writing a diary is fun and can be adapted to various writing experiences. As stated by Carr (1997: 5), writing an English diary can be an effective way and can be used as a teaching and learning tool to develop students' writing skills. Students can choose what text suits the story. There are also those who say that the contents of the diary itself are similar to recount text. As a recount text, a diary or journal also tells about past events and the sequence of events. According to (Oshima et al., 2007) writing a diary is an alternative for students to express their feelings more freely and also develop the language that students need every day.

The use of diaries to improve students' writing skills has been carried out by several researchers. One of Tuan's (2010) studies revealed that diaries can improve students' writing development. From the results of the experiments carried out, students who took the writing post-test progressed faster than the pre-test. These previous studies are guidelines to assist researchers in conducting research. Therefore, the researcher intends to improve writing skills by getting students used to writing diaries. The researcher is interested in making this topic the focus of the research. The aims of this research are: (1) to assess the level of students' writing abilities; (2) to understand teacher strategies in improving students' writing skills; and (3) to analyze the effect of the habit of writing a diary on students' writing abilities in class IX Mts. Masyithah.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Writing

Language skills are acquired from a process of regular and very complex relationships. Every aspect of skill is interconnected and forms a unified whole. Writing is one of the skills that is always considered in learning because it is very important for students to practice skills in giving ideas in each of their writings.

Concurred with Spratt, Pulverness, and Williams (2005) states that writing is one of the language skills that must be struggled alone. It means every English learner must master this ability in-depth and individually because Writing is included in productive skills. Spratt, Pulverness, and Williams (2005) also stated that writing is a productive skill for students because it is expected to be able to produce texts or messages for students to communicate with others. Because writing is a product of written language, writing requires special abilities. Written products are often the product of thought, drafting, and revising procedures that require special skills, not all skill speakers develop naturally.

Writing is an indirect communication activity because the writer does not deal directly with the reader but instead expresses thoughts, ideas, feelings, and imagination on paper with a series of writings that can be understood by the reader. As Harmer (2004) said, writing is an approach to creating language in expressing structured thoughts, ideas, and feelings in writing.

According to Borwn (2003: 335) Writing is seen as a series of activities that are flexible. The series of activities referred to include: pre-writing or the result of thoughts, drafting, revision, editing, and publication or discussion. Writing activities can broaden the horizons and theoretical knowledge of writing regarding related facts.

Writing skill is considered the most difficult skill to learn. Students as second learners of English still have difficulties in choosing the right words. As stated by Richard and Renandy (2002) the task of writing is a difficult task for learners, especially in a second language. Meanwhile, Zinsser (2021) states that writing is a tough challenge because they have to explore their ideas in good sentences, making each sentence correlate with one another. Harmer (2004) states that writing is more difficult than speaking because there are many aspects that need to be mastered, such as organization, vocabulary, mechanics, fluency, and grammar. Students learning difficulties in composing words become students' obstacles in the process of composing texts.

2.2 DIARY WRITING

Writing a diary can be used as a daily activity in developing students' writing creativity. students will be more relaxed and easier to understand what will be written. students will remember experiences and events that have been experienced and then will write them down in class with the selected text concept, it can recount text, or describe text.

Diary writing is a form of writing that contains personal life or personal situations packaged into the diary. According to Balton (2010), Diary is a form literary writing that contains personal life, feelings, ideas, hopes, or memories of an event. A diary can be close friends that can be used as a place to express all the complaints that can be written

according to the convenience of the writer. As mentioned by Bazir (2016) they are more coincident in what is written, they can justify mistakes that occur and can correct those mistakes.

Whereas in another Explanation Hawker (2008) stated diary is a book that contains note or writing about daily events, appointment notes, journals, and log. Fitzpatrick (2005) states that a diary is a personal record of the experiences of a writer and is usually personal. By writing diaries, students can explore and develop their ideas from real-life experiences, meaning they are trained to become sensitive writers who can get inspiration in writing. writing whatever happens in their daily life. It helps students to solve their problems deeply develop ideas in writing. So, even though a diary looks simply but it can be an effective thing in improving student's writing development.

Diary writing can be a good alternative technique to encourage and motivate students to practice writing. besides that, students can write about anything that interests them. They could write comments about the class they experienced, they could write about their personal lives, they could talk about politics or they could write stories. By doing this, students can also display their creativity. In a study conducted by Jin, (2005) it was revealed that those who are regularly involved in diary writing tend to show a tendency to express themselves. This is also in line with what Raimes (1983) wrote, who said that a person will not worry about being right when they write about something that concerns them. With this in mind, diaries are expected to provide students with fluency in writing, making diary writing a part of their lives, and slowly helping them build their writing habits.

The diary used in writing practice can improve students' writing skills because the diary is a medium for expressing ideas, feelings, and ideas that have occurred and then pouring them into written form which is generally written every day. When students are in class, students can re-explain the events that have occurred according to the generic structure chosen. For example, the concept of recount text means that students must follow the generic structure of recount text, namely the orientation (introduction) of events (events) and finally re-orientation (conclusion).

From some of the theories above, the author can emphasize that English diary writing can be defined as a diary that records events that occur personally, which can be updated daily, usually handwritten by expressing thoughts and daily experiences, arranged by date and not to be published.

3. METHOD

The research methodology used quantitative research with a quasi-experimental design. Type of research design used to assess the effect of a treatment or intervention when the actual randomization of subjects into groups is not feasible or practical. Instead, groups are selected based on pre-existing characteristics or other non-random methods. The experimental group received treatment, which involved the use of English diary writing, while the control group received no treatment and served as a comparison group (Cook & Wong, 2008; Kirk, 2009).

The participants in this study were exclusively grade XI students. The group was divided into two categories: the experimental class and the control class, each consisting of 15

students. All students in both groups were girls, and their ages ranged between 14 and 15 years. The research was conducted at MTs Masiythah.

In this study, two main instruments were used to collect data and measure the effectiveness of implementing diary writing in the classroom. The instrument is in the form of a written test and an interview guide.

The written test is carried out with a pre-test and post-test. The pre-test was given before the intervention (i.e. implementing diary writing in class) so students in the two classes were given the same questions and the same duration of time to understand the students' initial writing ability level. After that there will be treatment in the experimental class, students will write English diary writing for approximately 3 weeks. On the other hand, the post test is given after the intervention to assess whether there is an increase in students' writing skills from those who are given the same treatment as those who do not and what are the consequences of applying diary writing.

The post test is carefully designed to include various indicators that will be tested to measure students' writing abilities. Both the pre-test and post-test have a time limit of 40 minutes each. This time limit appears to have been enforced to ensure that students' responses were spontaneous and not over-edited, thus providing a more accurate picture of their writing ability. The test is given on a sheet of paper prepared by students, who suggests that they write their answers by hand.

In addition, this study also used interview guidelines to collect data about students' opinions regarding the application of diary writing in the experimental class and conventional learning in the control class. Interviews were conducted with a semi-structured approach. Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to have a predefined set of questions while still retaining the flexibility to explore topics further based on student responses. This method was most likely chosen to obtain specific information that could test the researcher's hypothesis regarding the effectiveness of diary writing as a teaching method to improve writing skills.

The researchers proceeded with the data analysis, which involved several parts outlined below

- Preliminary Analysis:** The preliminary analysis was conducted to determine if the data were suitable for t-test hypothesis testing. Two tests were performed, namely the normality test and the homogeneity test. Both tests were carried out using SPSS 21
- Descriptive statistic** The pre-test and post-test scores from both classes were computed and examined in order to assess the overall, average, and improved scores achieved.
- Testing Statistical Hypotheses by Using T-Test** To test the research hypotheses, the researchers used a t-test in SPSS 21. The statistical hypotheses were formulated as follows: Null Hypothesis (H₀): Diary writing is not effective in improving students' writing of recount text. Alternative Hypothesis (H_a): Diary writing is effective in improving students' writing of recount text.

4. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Finding

This analysis will provide a comprehensive picture of changes in performance before and after intervention in both classes. Below is a representation of students' pre-test scores in both classes.

Table 4.1 The score of pre test

score	Experimental Class		Control Class	
	freq	F%	freq	F%
<60= Low	8	47.22	10	65.55
60 – 70 = Medium	4	36.11	3	23.45
71 – 80 = High	3	16.67	2	11
81 – 90 =very High				
Max	77		71	
Min	55		55	
Mean Score	78		70	

The information presented in Table 4.1 highlights the performance of two classes the experimental class and the control class – in learning that involved understanding recount text. The maximum score achieved in both the experimental and control classes was 71. At the lower end, the experimental class had a minimum score of 59, while that of the control class was a minimum of 60. Interestingly, most of the students in both classes received low scores. in their pre-test – 47.22% in the experimental class and 65.55% in the control class. This shows that many students initially had difficulty understanding recount texts and needed improvement.

Furthermore, 36.11% of students in the experimental class were in the moderate score range of 60-70, compared to 23.45% in the control class. This shows that these students have moderate understanding of the material but still need improvement. In addition, 16.67% of the experimental class and 11% of the control class achieved high scores ranging from 71-80, indicating that only a small number of students already have a good understanding of recount text.

Notably, no students in both classes scored above 71 and 77, indicating that the highest level of understanding on the pre-test was a score of 79. The mean score revealed that the experimental class had an average score slightly lower than 55, compared to the control class' mean score of 55. Both mean scores were in the same range, categorized as low (50s or below 60), which confirmed that both classes initially had poor understanding of the recount text.

Regarding the statistical analysis, a t-test was performed, revealing a t-value of 0.356 with a p-value of 0.723. These results indicate that there is no significant difference between the experimental class (mean 78 and standard deviation 17.75) and the control class (mean 70 and standard deviation 19.90). Essentially, this implies that both classes were started at the

same level prior to any intervention. This alignment of initial abilities is very important for experimental studies.

Below the data **presenting** the results of the post - test in both classes

Table 4.2 The score of post test

score	Experimental Class		Control Class	
	freq	F%	freq	F%
<60= Low	4	25	9	61.33
60 – 70 = Medium	7	50	4	17.6
71 – 80 = High	3	15	2	11
81 – 90 =very High		10		
Max	80		77	
Min	58		55	
Mean Score	80		71	

The post test was done after the intervention ended and as indicated in the table 4.2 above, the maximum score in the experimental class is 80 while the maximum score in the control class is 77. The minimum score in the experimental class is 58 while the minimum score in the control class is 55. Moreover, there were fewer students (25%) in the experimental class who got low scores than the students in the control class (61.33%). This shows that many students in the experimental class improved their understanding of recount text from low to medium. Many students in the control class, however, still had poor understanding of recount text.

Furthermore, there were more students in the experimental class (50%) who fell into medium score category than those in the control class (17.67%) which means that there was not any significant improvement from low to medium category in the control class. The control class, however, has more students (15%) than the experimental ones (11%) in the high score category. Next, The table 4.2 also shows that there is one student (10%) in the experimental class who got very high score – above 80 while there is no student (0) in the control class. From those percentages, therefore, it can be concluded that the students in the experimental class experienced an improvement of the knowledge and understanding in terms of less students who got low scores, more students gained medium scores, there were more students who got high scores in the posttest compared to the pre-test, and also there was one student who got very high score. In the control class, on the contrary, there was not much improvement or significance as many students still got low scores indicating that the knowledge and understanding remained the same. This is also evidenced by the average value of the control class of 71, which is not much different from the pre-test average value of 70. Meanwhile, the experimental class has increased as evidenced by the posttest average value (80), which is higher than the average value. mean posttest control class (70).

After performing the normality and homogeneity test and having the normally distributed and homogenous data, the data now can be further analyzed by using the t-test in order to

determine the effectiveness of diary writing as the intervention. The posttest and gained scores in both classes, furthermore, are used for the t-test.

The result of this t-test would then be used to test the statistical hypotheses, answer the research question, and as one consideration to conclude the research. The t-test result is as foll.

4.2 Discussion

According the findings of the current study on encouraging writing skills through English diary writing for junior high school students provide valuable insights into the potential benefits of incorporating diary writing as an intervention in language education. The quantitative quasi-experimental method employed in this study allowed for the examination of the impact of diary writing on students' writing skills through pretest, posttest comparisons, and student interviews

The results indicate that the diary writing intervention had a positive effect on students' test scores, particularly in the higher score ranges (71-90). This improvement suggests that diary writing can be an effective tool for enhancing writing proficiency among junior high school students. The significant positive impact observed in this study aligns with previous research that has explored the benefits of expressive and diary writing in educational settings (Klimova, 2015).

The interviews conducted in this study further shed light on the mechanisms through which diary writing facilitates skill development. One notable outcome was the enhanced vocabulary usage among students. By engaging in regular diary writing, students actively sought out appropriate words to describe their experiences, leading to an expansion of their vocabulary repertoire. This finding is consistent with previous research that has highlighted the relationship between writing practice and improved language skills (Autila, 2017).

Another significant finding was the improvement in grammar and sentence structure. Through continuous diary writing, students demonstrated increased syntactical complexity and grammatical accuracy. This result is in line with prior studies that have shown how consistent writing practice contributes to the development of language proficiency, including grammar (Barjesteh et al. 2011).

Moreover, the interviews revealed that diary writing fostered increased expressive language skills. Students reported that they became more fluent in expressing their thoughts and feelings on paper. This fluency in writing suggests that diary writing can be a valuable tool in reducing writer's block and hesitancy, thereby enabling students to articulate their ideas more coherently and effectively. Overall, the current study contributes to the growing body of evidence supporting the use of diary writing as a pedagogical intervention to enhance writing skills among junior high school students. The positive impact on vocabulary usage, grammar, sentence structure, and expressive language skills underscores the potential value of incorporating regular diary writing activities in language classrooms.

5. CONCLUTION

In conclusion, this study shows that diary writing can be a valuable tool for improving writing skills among junior secondary school students. The positive impacts on vocabulary use, grammar, sentence structure and expressive language skills highlight the potential benefits of incorporating diary writing as a regular activity in language education. As educators continue to explore innovative approaches to developing students' writing skills, diary writing offers a promising way to encourage language proficiency and self-expression.

In addition, it is suggested that for writing skills through English diary writing to be effective and productive, researchers can establish a daily or weekly routine: Encourage writing at the same time every day or week. Consistency helps build habits and makes it easier to integrate into their routine. Add Multimedia Elements: Allow the inclusion of drawings, photos, or clippings. This can make the process more interesting

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