

Enhancing Writing Ability by Using Students' Personal Experience in Recount Text at XI Grade of SMK Negeri 7 MBD

¹Winnie Lewier, ²Monica, ³Yulina Tiwery

^{1,3}Program Studi Diluar Kampus Utama, Universitas Pattimura

²English Education Studi Program, FKIP, Universitas Pattimura

Corresponding e-mail: winnielewierr@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This research aims to examine whether using students' personal experiences can improve their ability to write recount texts and determine students' responses to applying this strategy. The research was conducted at SMK Negeri 7 MBD with research subjects of 15 class XI students. This research used a Classroom Action Research (PTK) design carried out in two cycles, each consisting of five meetings. Data was collected through observation, questionnaire and written tests. The research results show that using personal experience as a learning strategy can improve students' writing abilities in recounting text. The student's average score increased from 57.8 on the pre-test to 68.7 on post-test I and 81.8 on post-test II. The success indicator is that 75% of students achieve a minimum score of 70 or more. The percentage of students who achieved a mastery score was 20% on the pre-test, 60% on post-test I, and 100% on post-test II. This proves that the target of success has been achieved. In addition, the questionnaire results showed a student satisfaction level of 80%, which was categorized as "good". Based on these results, it can be concluded that personal experience can significantly improve students' writing abilities in recounting texts.

Keywords: *Writing, Personal Experience, Recount Text*

INTRODUCTION

Language is crucial for human interaction and communication, with English being a globally spoken and internationally recognized language. English is taught in Indonesia from primary schools to universities to prepare students for global society. Four language abilities are learned: reading, speaking, listening, and writing. Writing is a crucial skill in English, as it helps students express their experiences and knowledge, supports language abilities, and prepares them for adapting to global society (Susilawati, 2016).

Writing is one of the language abilities that a student must acquire, and it is not a natural skill because it does not happen naturally. (Anne Burns, 2018) stated that writing ability is the basis for academic success and plays an important role in education. In an educational context, the aim is for students to be competent to write various texts. (Muliani, 2016) stated that students should have good writing abilities and an extensive vocabulary so that they may choose the ideal words to communicate their thoughts.

However, writing is not an easy skill for most students to study. Hartawan (2015) stated that writing is the most challenging language skill for students and is not easy to master. Moreover, most of them showed no interest in writing. Sulistyani (2010) stated that writing is a dull and uninteresting activity. In learning to write, many students find it difficult to determine topics and explore their ideas in writing. These challenges are not merely theoretical but are also evident in real classroom settings. For instance, a preliminary study conducted with eleventh-grade students at SMK Negeri 7 MBD revealed various obstacles students face in developing their writing abilities.

After conducting a preliminary study at SMK Negeri 7 MBD, it was revealed that eleventh-grade students struggled with creative thinking in writing, leading to confusion and disinterest in English classes. Issues included determining generic structure and language features, using simple past tense form, and selecting appropriate vocabulary. Students struggled with choosing the right words, organizing texts correctly, and making grammatical errors, particularly with subject-verb agreement. The researcher collected data through direct observations in the eleventh grade at SMK Negeri 7 MBD. During the observations, the researcher recorded students' behaviors and interactions while participating in English lessons, particularly during writing activities.

The study suggests that teachers should find suitable strategies to improve writing abilities, particularly in past tenses sentences. Strategies should be easy to access, learn, and attract students' attention. Personal experiences should be the text's theme, as they are the main characters and can attract attention more quickly than other topics. According to Hirani (2020), students can boost their interest in writing by using their personal experiences, as they have directly encountered these events.

The research aims to enhance students' writing abilities in recount texts at XI Grade of SMK Negeri 7 MBD by exploring how incorporating personal experiences into writing tasks can improve their writing abilities. By allowing students to draw from their own experiences, the study seeks to determine if it can help them generate ideas more easily, better organize their writing, and expand their vocabulary. Additionally, the research will examine whether writing about personal experiences increases student engagement and motivation, leading to more authentic and meaningful learning outcomes in English writing classes.

METHOD

This study applied Classroom Action Research (CAR) to improve the writing abilities of eleventh-grade students at SMK Negeri 7 MBD in Tiakur, focusing on recounting texts. Arikunto (2008) stated that CAR involves teachers observing and gathering information about themselves, their students, and the learning process during classroom activities. The research involved 15 students and used the personal experience approach to help students enhance their writing abilities.

The research process followed four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. In the planning stage, the researcher collaborated with an English teacher to develop a lesson plan aligned with the 2013 Curriculum, focusing on teaching recount texts using personal experiences. The research was conducted over a month, each cycle comprising five meetings.

In the action phase, students began with a pre-test to assess their writing abilities, after which the researcher introduced recount texts, explaining their structure and language features. The students then started writing recount texts after the researcher had explained the concept of recount texts and their structure. In subsequent lessons, students applied the personal experience approach by writing recount texts based on their own experiences. To do this, students were encouraged to reflect on significant events in their lives, such as a memorable trip, an important celebration, or a personal achievement. They then organized these events in chronological order, starting with an introduction that set the scene, followed by the events presented in sequence, and concluding with a reflection or summary of the experience. Throughout the process, students used the simple past tense to describe the events and were guided by the researcher in structuring their texts and using appropriate vocabulary. The researcher also provided support in ensuring coherence and clarity in their writing. At the end of each cycle, a post-test was administered to assess students' progress.

During the observation phase, the researcher monitored students' engagement, participation, and attitudes throughout the lessons. An observation checklist was used to assess aspects such as attendance, participation in discussions, and collaboration. This data provided insights into how students responded to the teaching methods and where they encountered challenges in the writing process.

In the reflection stage, the researcher evaluated the effectiveness of the teaching approach. Based on the observations, the researcher identified areas of difficulty and made adjustments to improve the teaching strategy in the next cycle. The success of the research was measured by a target of 75% of students achieving a score of 70 or above on the post-test, which was considered a significant improvement in their writing abilities.

Data was collected through three main methods: tests, observations, and questionnaires. The pre-test and post-test were used to assess students' writing abilities, with scores based on a detailed scoring rubric that included content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. Observations focused on students' behaviors and attitudes during the lessons, while the questionnaire collected students' feedback on using personal experience in writing recount texts.

The data was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative data from observations and questionnaires provided insights into student engagement and perceptions. In contrast, quantitative data from the tests was analyzed using the scoring rubric, which helped determine improvements in writing performance.

The study found that using personal experiences to teach recount texts significantly improved students' writing abilities. The study also highlighted that Classroom Action Research (CAR) is an effective method for addressing specific challenges in writing instruction and that, with careful planning, observation, and reflection, teaching strategies can be adjusted and refined to meet students' needs.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to enhance the writing abilities of 11th-grade students at SMKN 7 MBD in writing recount texts using a personal experience strategy. Data were collected from the results of pre-tests, post-tests, observations, and questionnaires conducted over two cycles of classroom action research.

In Cycle I, students learned the basics of recount texts, including their structure, purpose, and language features. They participated in group discussions to share personal experiences that could be used for their stories. Despite these efforts, only 60% of students reached the target score in the post-test. The average score improved from 57.8 in the pre-test to 68.7 in the post-test. However, students faced limited vocabulary, grammar mistakes, and difficulties organizing their ideas. These issues made it hard for them to express their thoughts clearly in writing, showing the need for further support.

In Cycle II, the researcher added specific activities to help students overcome the difficulties identified in the first cycle. These included grammar lessons, vocabulary-building activities, and writing templates to guide students in creating recount texts. Peer reviews were also introduced, allowing students to give and receive feedback on their drafts. These changes were successful, as the average score increased to 81.8 in the second post-test, with 100% of students achieving the target score of 70 or higher. This showed a significant improvement in their writing abilities.

The teacher's observation checklist showed important information about the student's progress during Cycles 1 and 2. In Cycle 1, many students struggled with the new strategy. They lacked confidence and did not know how to organize their thoughts, leading to disengagement and confusion. They needed more guidance and clearer instructions to follow the strategy properly.

In Cycle 2, the teacher refined the teaching approach based on the observations and challenges encountered during Cycle 1. The strategy was broken down into smaller steps, giving students more chances to ask questions. The teacher also used encouragement and praise to help build students' confidence and make them more willing to participate. By practicing writing regularly and making it more enjoyable, students started seeing it as fun rather than complex.

By the end of Cycle 2, students showed progress in their writing, focus, and attitude toward learning. They became more confident and engaged in the writing process. Students who were once hesitant or not engaged began participating more and felt better about expressing their ideas. They focused better during activities, showing they were more comfortable with the tasks. Many students also had a more positive attitude toward writing and were willing to take risks in their writing. The cycle showed that students could overcome challenges and improve their writing abilities with the proper support. In Cycle 1, students had trouble because they lacked confidence, didn't understand the instructions, and lost interest in the tasks. They were unsure of how to start writing or organize their ideas, which caused frustration. In Cycle 2, the teacher made changes by making the instructions simpler, breaking the tasks into smaller steps, and giving more examples to show how to write. This made

students feel more confident and less confused. The teacher also encouraged students and praised even small improvements, which helped motivate them and made them feel better about their work. By the end of Cycle 2, students were more confident, could write more clearly, and stayed focused better. This showed that with the right help, students could improve their writing and feel more positive about it.

The questionnaire results also showed the positive impact of this approach. 80% of students said using personal experiences was interesting and helped them gain confidence and improve their writing. Personal experiences made the writing process easier, as students could relate to the topics and familiarly share their thoughts. This made them more motivated to write and improve their work.

Discussion

This research focused on enhancing students' writing abilities, particularly in writing recount texts, through the use of the personal experience strategy. The study demonstrated that this approach was effective in improving student engagement, writing skills, and overall performance. By having students draw on their personal experiences, they became more connected to the material, which helped them better understand the structure of recount texts and improve their vocabulary, content, grammar, and mechanics. The personal experience strategy made writing lessons more meaningful and engaging, encouraging students to actively participate and feel more confident in expressing their ideas. This approach also fostered self-expression and enhanced vocabulary development, as students were motivated to use a broader range of words to describe their experiences.

However, the research also revealed some challenges. There was a noticeable variation in students' language abilities, with some students able to construct sentences and phrases easily, while others struggled. This created discrepancies in the class, requiring extra time and support for students with lower proficiency, which occasionally slowed down the overall lesson flow. Additionally, while many students found it easier to write about personal experiences, a few struggled to expand on their ideas or include sufficient details. These students needed additional prompting to recall and organize relevant aspects of their experiences into coherent texts. Furthermore, some students relied heavily on the teacher for translation and language support due to limited vocabulary and grammar knowledge, which reduced the amount of independent writing practice and hindered the development of self-sufficiency in writing.

Despite these challenges, the personal experience strategy proved to be a valuable tool in improving students' writing abilities. It enhanced their motivation and engagement, allowing them to produce more structured and meaningful recount texts. The approach also highlighted the importance of adapting to students' varying proficiency levels and providing additional support where necessary. Overall, the study suggested that integrating personal experiences into writing instruction can be a powerful way to boost student engagement, self-expression, vocabulary development, and writing proficiency.

CONCLUSION

This study showed that using the personal experience strategy helped students enhance their ability to write recount texts. Their scores improved from the start to the end of the study, showing they made progress. They became better at understanding how recount texts are structured and enhanced their ability in areas like vocabulary, content, grammar, and writing mechanics, such as punctuation and spelling. This suggests that the strategy helped them improve both their ability to write recount texts and their overall writing skills.

The strategy also made learning more interesting and relatable. By writing about their own experiences, students felt more confident and motivated to write in English, leading to more active class participation. 80% of students said they enjoyed writing recount texts using their personal stories. Using their own experiences helped students understand the basic structure of recount texts—orientation, sequence of events, and reorientation. As they shared their personal stories, they naturally followed this structure, which improved the organization and flow of their writing.

However, some challenges still existed. Not all students reached the expected level of vocabulary and grammar. Some needed more help to expand their ideas and keep their writing logical. This highlighted the need for more focus on vocabulary building and grammar support. Overall, the personal experience strategy successfully improved students' writing abilities, engaging them in learning and boosting their confidence in expressing personal experiences. This approach made learning more meaningful and accessible, especially when writing recount texts. While most students improved their understanding and use of recount text structure, some still struggled with vocabulary, keeping their writing organized, and grammatical accuracy. These difficulties showed that more support is needed, particularly in vocabulary and grammar.

The researcher also offered suggestions for teachers and future researchers. Teachers should use the personal experience strategy to help students write more quickly and actively participate in lessons. Teachers need to be facilitators and motivators. For students who struggle with English, staying motivated and curious about the subject will help them understand it better. Lastly, future researchers can use this study as a guide to further explore ways to improve students' writing abilities. There is room for improvement; more research can build on these results to improve writing instruction.

REFERENCES.

- Arif, M. (2012). *Using picture to improve the ability to writing to write paragraph of third-year student of SMP 5 Pamboang*. Parepare: STAIN.
- Arikunto, S. (2008). *Penelitian tindakan kelas*. Jakarta: PT Bumi Aksara.
- Arikunto, S. (2010). *Prosedur penelitian: Suatu pendekatan praktik*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- Boardman. (2008). The effectiveness of using recount text to improving writing skill for grade III students. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 57.

- Brown, D. (2004). *Language assessment principles and classroom practice*. England: Longman.
- Brown, D. H. (2001). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy*. New York: Pearson Education.
- Burns, A. (2018). *Writing: A tool for academic success*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- D. (2015). Model inkuiri dalam pembelajaran menulis teks eksposisi di SMA Negeri 1 Sukasada. *Journal Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia*.
- Dornyei, Z. (2005). *The psychology of the language learner: Individual differences in second language acquisition*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Douglas, B. (2009). *The advantages of personal experience in language learning*.
- Fausiah. (2007). *Improving the writing ability of the English students of STAIN Parepare through adjective clause mastery*. Parepare: STAIN.
- Fauzi, A. (2015). Types of personal experience.
- Hardianti, R. (2017). *The importance of writing practice in language acquisition*. *Journal of Language Teaching*, 9(2), 120-135.
- Hairani, J. (2020). *The effect of personal experience strategy on students' achievement in writing* (Dissertation). Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara.
- Harmer, J. (2002). *The practice of English teaching*. Malaysia: Longman.
- Harmer, J. (2004). *How to teach writing*. England: Pearson Education Limited.
- Harmer, J. (2007). *How to teach writing*. England: Pearson Education Limited.
- Hartawan, A. E. (2015). *Challenges in learning writing skills in second language acquisition*. *Journal of Education*, 12(3), 45-56.
- Hartawan, A. E., Putrayasa, I. B., & Artika, W. (n.d.). Model inkuiri dalam pembelajaran menulis teks eksposisi.
- Hartono, R. (2005). *Genre of texts*. Semarang: English Department of Semarang University. (Unpublished).
- Heaton, J. B. (1991). *Writing English language tests*. New York: Longman.
- Hedge, T. (2005). *Writing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hornby, A. S. (1995). *Oxford advanced learner's dictionary of current English*. London: University Press.
- Hyland, K. (2003). *Second language writing*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Kunandar. (2012). *Langkah mudah penelitian tindakan kelas sebagai pengembangan profesi guru*. Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada.
- Lefrancois. (2005). *Writing a personal experience*.
- Lestari, W. T. (2018). *The use of personal experience photograph to improve students' writing skill in recount text (A Classroom Action Research for the Tenth Grade Students of SMK Telekomunikasi Tunas Harapan Tenggara in the Academic Year 2018/2019)*. IAIN SALATIGA.
- Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2013). *How languages are learned* (4th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Muliani, M. (2016). *Using students' personal experiences to improve the students' writing ability of the second year of MAN Baranti Kabupaten Sidrap* (Doctoral dissertation, IAIN Parepare).
- Nunan, D. (1999). *Second language teaching and learning*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Pardiyono. (2007). *Teaching genre-based writing*. Yogyakarta: Andi Offset.
- Parel, M. F., & Jain, P. M. (2013). *English language teaching*. Jaipur: Sunrise Publisher.
- Pusat Kurikulum. (2007). Model penelitian SMA. Retrieved from <http://www.puskor.net/inc/mdl/083>.
- Raimes, A. (1983). *Techniques in teaching writing*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Richards, J. C., & Renandya, W. A. (Eds.). (2002). *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sokolik, E. M. (2005). The shared responsibility for professional development. *TESL-EJ*, 9(1). Retrieved from <http://tesl-ej.org/ej33/f1.pdf>.
- Sulistyani, S. (2010). *Writing: A boring and uninteresting activity?* *Journal of Educational Research*, 8(1), 101-112.
- Susilawati, I. (2016). *The use of personal experience to enhance students' writing skill in recount text through team pair solo* (Skripsi).
- Susilawati, I. (2016). *The role of writing in developing English language proficiency*. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, 2(4), 34-42.
- Sutinah. (2009). *Using picture story to improve the writing ability of eight-year students of SMP Negeri 2 Baranti*. STAIN Parepare.
- Tompkin, G. E. (2010). *Teaching writing: Balancing process and product* (6th ed.). Boston: Pearson.
- Watkins, et al. (2003). *Practical English handbook*.
- Weigle, S. C. (2002). *Assessing writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Wibowo, A. K. (2013). Improving students' writing ability in narrative text by using chronological 3D pictures as media. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, 2(1), June 2013