

Implementation of the Language Experience Approach to Improve Students' Writing Skills at SD Negeri Siem

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Abstract: This research aims to improve the writing skills of grade II students of SD Negeri Siem through the application of the Language Experience Approach (LEA) method. The background of this research is the low writing ability of students, as can be seen from the pre-cycle results that are still below the Minimum Completeness Criteria (KKM) set. This research uses the Classroom Action Research (PTK) approach which is carried out in two cycles, each through the stages of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. The research subjects amounted to 21 students, consisting of 11 males and 10 females. Research data was collected through writing learning outcome tests, observation of student activities, and documentation during the learning process. The results showed a significant improvement in writing skills after the application of the LEA method. In the pre-cycle, most students have not reached KKM. After the implementation of the first cycle, students' writing skills began to improve, although there were still some who did not meet the criteria. In cycle II, almost all students managed to achieve KKM with a clear improvement in terms of sentence structure, vocabulary choice, and courage to pour ideas in written form. Thus, the application of the LEA method has proven to be effective in improving the writing skills of grade II students of SD Negeri Siem.

Keywords: Language Experience Approach, writing skills, primary school.

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INTRODUCTION

Basic education is an important level in building the foundation of students' academic skills, including reading and writing skills. At this stage, children are in a very rapid period of language development so they need the guidance of teachers with the right learning methods. Writing skills are one of the language skills that students must master since elementary school, because through writing students learn to organize ideas, use vocabulary appropriately, and express ideas sequentially. Writing is not only related to the ability to pour words, but also to train children's logical mindset, imagination, and creativity (Tarigan, 2013).

Writing skills have an important position in education because they are the primary means for students to communicate their thoughts and feelings. Students who are skilled in writing will find it easier to formulate new ideas, understand lessons, and build confidence in expressing ideas. However, the reality is that many elementary school

students still face difficulties in writing, both in terms of sentence structure, vocabulary choice, and the fluency of expressing ideas. This difficulty is often caused by learning methods that are still teacher-centered and do not provide space for students to express themselves. As a result, students become passive, bored quickly, and their writing learning outcomes are low (Suparno & Yunus, 2010).

Based on the results of initial observations made by researchers in grade II of SD Negeri Siem, students' writing skills are still low. Of the 21 students, most of them were unable to write in order, many spelling errors, and had difficulty developing ideas into a complete sentence. The scores obtained by students in the pre-cycle show that most of them are still below the Minimum Completeness Criteria (KKM) set. This shows that there is a need for more effective learning efforts to help students develop writing skills.

Efforts to improve students' writing skills must begin with the selection of methods that suit the characteristics of elementary school children. Students of this age tend to learn better through hands-on experiences and fun activities. One of the methods that is considered appropriate is the Language Experience Approach (LEA). LEA is a language learning approach that links students' real experiences with writing activities. According to Stauffer (1970), LEA helps students pour personal experiences into written form, so that writing becomes a meaningful and easy-to-understand activity.

The implementation of LEA begins by inviting students to experience an activity, then they discuss the experience with the teacher. The results of the discussion were then poured into the writing with the guidance of the teacher. Through this stage, students can learn to compose sentences based on their own experiences. This is in line with the opinion of Hiebert and Raphael (1996) that real experience is an important resource in learning to write because it helps students connect spoken language with written language.

The advantage of the LEA method is that it is able to create an active, fun, and developmental learning atmosphere. Students are not only required to copy the text, but are invited to write based on what they experience and think. Thus, students feel more involved in the learning process and it is easier to understand the material. Previous research has also shown that LEAs are effective in improving the writing skills of elementary school students (May, 2010). Therefore, the application of this method is expected to be a solution in overcoming the low writing skills of grade II students of SD Negeri Siem. In addition to being relevant to student characteristics, LEAs also support active student-centered learning. According to Vygotsky (1978), social interaction has an important role in children's language development. Through discussion activities in the LEA, students can exchange ideas, enrich vocabulary, and learn to compose sentences from shared experiences. This is in line with the constructivist view that knowledge is built through experience and interaction.

The urgency of this research is increasingly felt because writing skills are basic competencies that students must master to continue to the next level of education. If writing skills are not developed from an early age, students will have difficulty understanding other subjects that require reading and writing skills, such as mathematics, science, and social studies. By using LEAs, teachers can instill the foundation of writing skills while building students' motivation to learn.

The research gap is also seen from the lack of use of innovative methods in elementary schools, especially in Indonesian language learning. Most teachers still rely on lecture methods or writing assignments without clear guidance. As a result, students find it difficult and unmotivated to write. This research is here to fill this gap by testing the effectiveness of the LEA method in grade II students of SD Negeri Siem. With this background, this study aims to find out the extent to which the application of the Language Experience Approach method can improve the writing skills of grade II students of SD Negeri Siem. In particular, this study is expected to provide an overview of how LEA affects students' writing learning outcomes, their motivation in writing, and changes in attitudes towards language learning. The results of this research are expected to be useful

for teachers in choosing the right learning method, for students in improving writing skills, and for schools in efforts to improve the quality of Indonesian learning.

METHODS

This study uses the Classroom Action Research (PTK) approach. PTK was chosen because it is in accordance with the research objectives that focus on improving the learning process in the classroom and improving student learning outcomes. According to Arikunto (2015), PTK is a research activity carried out in the classroom by teachers with the aim of improving the quality of learning they carry out. PTK is carried out on a cyclical and continuous basis, so that teachers can find the best way to overcome the learning problems they face.

The subject of this study is a second grade student of SD Negeri Siem, Darussalam District, Aceh Besar Regency. The number of students is 21 people, consisting of 11 male students and 10 female students. They were made the subject of research because based on the results of initial observations, their writing skills were still low. Most students are not able to write simple sentences in a row, there are still many spelling mistakes, and difficulty developing ideas into complete paragraphs. The research location was chosen because the researcher is a teacher at the school so that it is easier to carry out actions, observe changes, and make learning improvements.

This research was carried out in two cycles. Each cycle consists of four stages, namely planning, implementation of actions, observation, and reflection. This model refers to the design developed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1990) which views PTK as a spiral process. The spiral starts with planning, then continues with actions, observations, and reflections that will be the basis for the next planning. At the planning stage, the researcher prepares a Learning Implementation Plan (RPP) by applying the Language Experience Approach (LEA) method. The lesson plan contains learning steps that emphasize students' active involvement in pouring their experiences into written form. In addition, the researcher also prepared research instruments in the form of observation sheets, learning outcome tests, and documentation.

The stage of implementing the action is carried out in accordance with the plan that has been prepared. The teacher starts the learning by providing experiences or activities with students, then students are invited to tell about the experience. The teacher writes down the students' experiences on the board, then together they edit the sentences to make them more precise. Afterwards, students are given the opportunity to copy, rewrite, and develop writing based on the experience. This process is in accordance with the principle of LEA put forward by Stauffer (1970), which is to connect students' spoken language with written language.

The observation stage is carried out at the same time as the implementation of the action. Researchers and collaborating teachers observe student activities during the learning process. Observations were focused on students' activeness in participating in activities, their skills in composing sentences, and their attitude towards learning to write. Observation sheets are used to record the activities of teachers and students so that the data is more systematic. According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), planned observation can provide an accurate picture of changes in student behavior.

The reflection stage is carried out after the cycle is completed. Reflection is carried out by analyzing test results and observation data, then comparing them with the set success criteria. If the results obtained have not met the target, then improvements will be formulated to be implemented in the next cycle. Reflection functions as an evaluation material so that the implementation of actions is more targeted (Hopkins, 2011). The test is used to measure a student's writing skills. The test is in the form of a simple writing assignment according to the experience or activity carried out by the student. According to Sugiyono (2018), a test is a measurement tool used to obtain data on learning abilities or

achievements. Tests are given at the end of the pre-cycle, cycle I, and cycle II to find out the development of students' writing skills over time.

Observation sheets are used to assess the activities of teachers and students in the learning process. Students' observations include indicators such as participation in discussions, ability to convey ideas, courage to write sentences, and skills to work together with friends. Teachers' observations include classroom management skills, the ability to guide students, and the use of the LEA method as planned. Documentation is used to complete the research data. Documentation in the form of photos of learning activities, teacher notes, and student writings. According to Moleong (2017), documentation can strengthen research evidence because it provides a real picture of the implementation of actions.

Data collection techniques are carried out through tests, observations, and documentation. The test provides quantitative data on students' writing skills, while observation and documentation provide qualitative data on the learning process. This combination provides a more complete picture of student development. The data obtained was analyzed using quantitative and qualitative descriptive analysis techniques. Quantitative data in the form of test results were analyzed by calculating the average class score and the percentage of student completion. The criteria for completeness are determined if at least 80% of students obtain a score of ≥ 70 . Meanwhile, qualitative data from observations were analyzed descriptively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2014).

This research is considered successful if there is an increase in students' writing learning outcomes, provided that at least 80% of students achieve KKM scores. In addition, success is also measured by increasing student participation and motivation in the learning process. Sardiman (2011) explained that learning motivation can be observed from students' involvement in asking, answering, and completing assignments. To maintain the validity of the data, this study uses a triangulation technique. Triangulation is carried out by comparing data from tests, observations, and documentation. Denzin (2012) stated that triangulation can increase confidence in research results because data is obtained from various sources and methods. In addition, the involvement of collaborator teachers in observation also helps to increase the objectivity of the data. With this method, the research is expected to provide a clear picture of the effectiveness of the LEA method in improving the writing skills of grade II students of SD Negeri Siem.

RESULTS

This research was carried out in grade II of SD Negeri Siem with a total of 21 students, consisting of 11 males and 10 females. The purpose of the research is to improve students' writing skills by using the Language Experience Approach (LEA) method. The results of the study were presented based on the initial condition of the pre-cycle, the results of actions in cycle I, and improvements in cycle II. Data were obtained through writing skills tests, observation of student activities, and documentation during learning. Before the action was carried out, the researcher conducted initial observations and wrote skills tests. Pre-cycle results show that most students are not yet able to write simple sentences well. Many students make spelling mistakes, punctuation, and difficulty connecting words into sentences. The grades obtained in the pre-cycle also showed that most students were below the Minimum Completeness Criteria (KKM). Of the 21 students, only a small percentage achieved grades above the KKM, while the rest still needed improvement.

In addition, the results of observations showed that students seemed less motivated in participating in writing learning. They tend to be passive, unenthusiastic, and have difficulty when asked to pour ideas into writing. This condition is in line with the findings of Graham and Perin (2007) who stated that elementary school students often experience obstacles in writing due to the lack of learning strategies that are appropriate to their developmental stages. In cycle I, researchers began to apply the LEA method in learning.

The learning process begins with a joint activity experienced by students, then the experience is retold and expressed in the form of writing with the guidance of the teacher. The teacher helps the students compose the sentences, write them down on the board, and then work together to make the sentences better.

The results of the writing skills test at the end of cycle I showed an increase compared to the pre-cycle. More students have managed to achieve KKM scores. Students have begun to be able to write simple sentences with more precise spelling, although there are still minor errors in the use of punctuation and sentence structure. Of the 21 students, more than half managed to improve their grades, although not all of them reached the KKM. Observations show that student motivation is also starting to increase. They were more enthusiastic when asked to share their experiences, looked brave enough to speak in front of the class, and were more active in discussions. However, student involvement is not evenly distributed. Some students are still passive, just following directions without taking the initiative to write independently. This is in accordance with the findings of Tompkins (2012) that the implementation of writing strategies requires a gradual process so that all students can adapt to the new approach.

Reflections on cycle I show that the main weakness is the lack of specific direction to passive students. In addition, the learning time used to compose sentences together is sometimes too long, so some students lose focus. Based on the results of the reflection, the researcher made improvements in cycle II. The teacher provides clearer direction about the role of each student in the group, so that all students get the opportunity to contribute. Teachers also prepare supporting media in the form of simple pictures that suit students' experiences so that they can more easily express ideas in the form of writing. The results of the writing skills test at the end of cycle II showed a better improvement than cycle I. Almost all students managed to achieve KKM scores. Of the 21 students, most achieved higher grades, with more flowing writing, more precise spelling, and the ability to develop ideas into simple paragraphs. This improvement shows that the LEA method is effective in helping students master writing skills.

Students' motivation to learn has also experienced positive development. Observations show that students are more active in conveying ideas, are excited to write about their experiences, and do not hesitate to read the results of their writing in front of the class. The learning atmosphere becomes more lively, students support each other, and teachers are easier to guide because students seem enthusiastic. This is in line with the opinion of Vygotsky (1978) who emphasized that social interaction helps children's language development through discussion and collaboration.

When compared from pre-cycle to cycle II, the improvement in students' writing skills is evident. In the pre-cycle, the majority of students have not reached KKM, their writing still has many errors, and the ideas expressed are very limited. After the implementation of the LEA in cycle I, the number of students who reached the KKM increased, and their writing began to improve in terms of spelling and sentence structure. In cycle II, the improvement was increasingly visible, where almost all students achieved KKM with a more concise and clear writing quality.

This development shows that the LEA method is able to bridge students' difficulties in writing. By relating students' real experiences, this method makes writing feel easier and more enjoyable. Stauffer (1970) explained that LEAs are effective because they provide students with the opportunity to write based on their own spoken language, so that there is a direct relationship between experience, speech, and writing. The findings of this study also support the results of previous research. May (2010) found that LEAs help students improve their language skills because they learn to write from personal experience. Hiebert and Raphael (1996) also emphasized that real experience is an important resource for training children's writing skills. Thus, the results of this study add to the evidence that the LEA method is relevant in learning to write in elementary school.

The results of this study prove that the application of the LEA method can improve the writing skills of grade II students of SD Negeri Siem. From the pre-cycle that was still

low, student learning outcomes continued to increase until they reached the target in cycle II. This increase is not only seen in grades, but also in students' higher motivation to learn to write. This study confirms that learning strategies that involve students' real experiences are more effective than conventional methods that only emphasize assignments without guidance.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study show that the application of the Language Experience Approach (LEA) method can improve the writing skills of grade II students of SD Negeri Siem. This increase can be seen from pre-cycle to cycle II conditions. In the pre-cycle, most students were not able to write well, both in terms of spelling, sentence structure, and fluency of ideas. After the action in the first cycle, students' writing skills began to improve, although there were still some students who had not reached the Minimum Completeness Criteria (KKM). In cycle II, almost all students managed to achieve KKM, with more concise, clear, and in accordance with the rules of language.

This improvement in students' writing skills is in line with the theory put forward by Stauffer (1970) that LEAs help students connect oral experiences with written language. Thus, writing is no longer seen as a difficult task, but as a continuation of everyday experience. When students write based on real experiences, they find it easier to find words that are appropriate, because they come from what they see, hear, and do. The results of this study also support the opinion of Graham and Perin (2007) who affirm that effective writing learning must relate students' personal experiences so that they are more motivated. This is evident in this study, where student motivation increased after the implementation of LEA. Students are more courageous to put forward ideas, enthusiastically participate in discussions, and are enthusiastic about writing about their experiences. With a fun learning atmosphere, writing skills develop gradually.

Selain meningkatkan hasil belajar, metode LEA juga memperbaiki sikap siswa terhadap pembelajaran menulis. Awalnya, siswa terlihat pasif dan enggan menulis. Namun setelah siklus II, siswa menjadi lebih percaya diri dan bersemangat dalam menyusun kalimat. Hal ini sesuai dengan temuan Tompkins (2012) yang menyatakan bahwa kegiatan menulis yang melibatkan pengalaman pribadi dapat menumbuhkan rasa percaya diri siswa. Ketika tulisan mereka berasal dari pengalaman sendiri, siswa merasa lebih dekat dengan aktivitas menulis dan menganggapnya sebagai kegiatan yang bermakna.

In terms of the theory of language development, the results of this research can also be explained through Vygotsky's (1978) view of the importance of social interaction. Through discussions with peers and teachers, students acquire new vocabulary, learn to improve sentences, and develop better ideas. Thus, LEAs not only improve writing skills, but also develop students' social abilities in working together and communicating. The results of this study are in line with the study of Hiebert and Raphael (1996) who stated that students' real experiences are an important source for practicing writing skills. In this study, students wrote more easily because their writing departed from direct experience. With the guidance of the teacher, the experience is transformed into simple sentences, then developed into paragraphs. This process makes it easier for students to understand the relationship between spoken and written language.

The findings of this study also support the research of May (2010) which shows that LEA can improve students' language skills overall. Not only writing, but also reading and speaking. In this study, students' speaking skills also improved because they were trained to relate experiences before writing them. This activity has a positive impact on the development of students' language in an integrated manner.

In terms of practice, this study implies that teachers need to be more creative in choosing writing learning methods. Traditional methods that only assign students to copy texts or write without guidance often leave students bored and difficult. With LEA, teachers can create a fun and meaningful learning atmosphere. The teacher acts as a

facilitator who guides students from real experience to writing. This makes students more active, involved, and have a sense of ownership of the writing they produce.

This research also shows that improving writing skills cannot be achieved instantly, but through a gradual process. In the first cycle, the results obtained were not optimal because students were still adapting to new methods. However, after the improvement in cycle II, the results increased significantly. This supports the view of Kemmis and McTaggart (1990) that PTK is an iterative process that provides an opportunity to make continuous improvements until the expected results are achieved. LEAs have proven to be effective because they fit the student's developmental stages, actively engage them, and depart from real experience. This research contributes to educational practice by showing that writing skills can be significantly improved through a simple but meaningful approach.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research that has been conducted on grade VI students of SD Negeri Siem Aceh Besar, it shows that in the overview of student observations in cycle I, the number of acquisitions with the category of incomplete is 57% and students who complete as much as 43%. Meanwhile, in the second cycle, 9.6% of students who did not complete and 90.4% of students who completed it. Thus, based on these data, it can be concluded that the writing skills taught with the Language Experience Approach (LEA) approach in grade VI students of SD Negeri Siem are good and improved from before. Although there are still shortcomings in writing words or sentences.

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