

Improving Students' Writing Skills through Group Work

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ABSTRACT

This research was aimed to improve students' writing skills through group work. The subject of the research were the 11th IPA 7 of SMA Negeri 1 Natar that consisted of 36 students. This research used Classroom Action Research (CAR) which was consisted of two cycles. Collection data technique was used test and non-test. Writing test used to know students' writing skill. Meanwhile, observation sheet and interview for non-test. Data analyzing was used quantitative and qualitative method. Refers to the result of the test, the mean score of students' learning activities cycle 1 was 6.65 with the criteria was less active. Meanwhile in cycle 2 was 7.57 with the criteria was active. The improvement was 0.92. In the other hand, mean score of writing test in cycle 1 was 60 or 8 students who got score ≥ 70 with the percentage 22%. Meanwhile, mean of writing test in cycle 2 was 75.57 or 20 students who got score ≥ 70 with the percentage 55%. The improvement was 33% or 15.57. Based on the result of the research, Group Work can improve students' writing skill in the 11th IPA 7 of SMA Negeri 1 Natar.

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1. INTRODUCTION

English is an international language because English is used in various people's lives almost worldwide. As the International language, English has been known by the world community for a long time. The diversity of cultures that find expression in it is a reminder that the history of English is a story of cultures in contact during the past 1,500 years [1]. Although English has been considered the first foreign language since the 1950s, generally speaking, Indonesian students' proficiency in English remains low [2]. In learning English, four important skills must be learned: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These four skills need to be mastered because these skills connect with each other, and they are needed for communication, especially in writing. Writing plays an important role in many ways in daily life. Writing is one way to express our ideas and thoughts and get information by written form [3]. Based on preliminary research conducted by the writer at SMA Negeri 1 Natar, the result of the mean for students' writing is 62,75. The writer also found that students' writing skill needs to be improved. Students find it difficult to express their ideas in writing because the students have limited vocabulary and a lack of grammatical knowledge. Another factor that hinders students in writing is the students are not used to expressing their ideas in written form. The writer also found the students need appropriate techniques in learning writing. In this study, the writer will use group work techniques to improve students' writing skills. Group work is a technique in a learning process that consists of two or more students to do an activity.

Writing is not only an activity of arranging words into form of sentence, but also when people write, they should organize some interesting stuffs, which experiences or ideas in writing form [4]. Writing is a medium of human communication that represents language and emotion through the inscription or recording of signs and

symbols [4]. Writing is hard for most of Indonesian students but it does not mean that it cannot be made easy [5]. Writing can be a fun activity if the students is accustomed to writing. To get good writing, the researchers should consider everything to support the topic, for example right grammatical and choosing good language [3]. A good written form is that can be read by the general public by paying attention to the selection of vocabulary that is in accordance with the target reader and the use of appropriate grammar in accordance with the sentence structure used. Writing is the one that teachers and learners seem most reluctant to focus on because it requires them to make special efforts [6]. There are several difficulties experienced by students in writing, and these difficulties will be a challenge for teachers to invite and teach students to be able to write well. The difficulty lies not only in generating and organizing ideas, but also in translating these ideas into readable text [7]. In writing, students is not only able to directly produce a written form, but through several categories first to produce a good written form that can be read by the general public. Writing performance had five categories, namely, imitative, intensive, self-writing, display writing and real writing [8].

Group work is a generic term covering a multiplicity of techniques in which two or more students are assigned a task that involves collaboration and self-initiated language [8]. Group work can develop a critical thinking in problem solving and develop the ability to socialize and communications [9]. By using group work techniques, students will find it easy to complete the tasks given by the teacher, because students work on their assignments together. In general, small groups of about five students – but perhaps no less – provoke greater involvement and participation than larger groups [6]. Students with smaller groups are required to be able to complete the assignments by being actively involved in their groups and not relying on other friends in the group. The use of discussion groups, group work, and pair work has often been advocated in teaching both languages and other subjects [10]. Typically, such groups are used to provide a change from the normal pace of classroom events and to increase the amount of student participation in lessons. In the use of group work techniques in learning English, not only students are required to be active but the teacher must also be active and participate in learning. The teacher's role in group work is not only at the beginning of learning but also during learning and after learning [6]. Benefits of Group Work are, group work generates interactive language, group work offers an embracing affective climate, group work promotes learner responsibility and autonomy, group work is a step towards individualizing instruction [8].

There are several studies dealing with students' writing skill and group work. First, the research by Enita Sari (2017) entitled "The Influence of Group Work Towards Students' Ability in Writing Recount Text of Eleventh Class at MA DARUL MA'ARIF Natar Lampung Selatan in 2016/2017" [11]. This research focuses on Students' Ability in Writing Recount Text and Group Work. This study uses an experimental research method. Second, the research by Wardiatul Janna (2019) entitled "Students' Perception on The Use of Group Work Activities in Learning English (A Descriptive Study At the Eleventh Grade in MA Muallimin Muhammadiyah Makassar)" [9]. The objective of the research was to find out the students' perception in learning English using group work activities and the students' achievement in learning English using group work activities. The similarity between the research conducted by the writer and the two researchers above is that both of them discuss learning English, especially writing using the Group Work technique. The different between the research conducted by the writer and the two researchers above is the two researches above generally only discuss of the influence of group work and students' perceptions of group work.

2. METHOD

The research was conducted of the grade eleventh science four students at SMA Negeri in academic year 2022/2023. The subject of the research were the students at the eleventh science four of SMA Negeri 1 Natar. The class were consists of 36 students. This research used Classroom Action Research (CAR) to improve students' writing skill through group work. Action research is a high-transparency teaching model that allows teachers to determine student achievement on a daily basis rather than waiting for the end of the quarter [12]. By using the Class Action Research (CAR) method, students would found it easier to improve the quality and understanding of learning and teachers can easy to give the achievements to students. This study was used two cycles in Classroom Action Research. Each cycle consists of planning, action, observation, and reflection. Each cycle consist of two meetings. Implementing of the research as follow [13]:

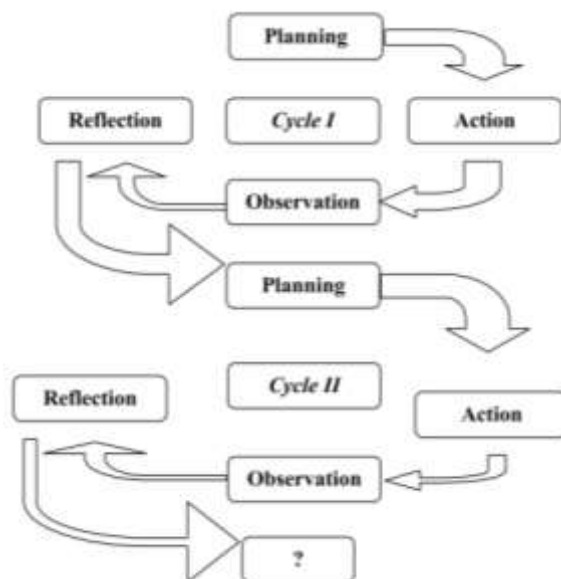


Figure 1. Implementing of Classroom Action Research

Data collection technique in this research was used test and non-test. Test used writing test to know the students' writing skills. the students asked to made an Analytical Exposition Text based on the topics given. In assessing students' writing skills, the writer was used the assessment rubric purposed by Brown which assessed writing scores in several aspects, namely: content, organization, vocabulary, grammar and mechanics [14]. Observation sheet also used to measure the students' activity during teaching and learning process. Non-test used documentation such as photos to collected the data. Documentation that contains information serves as evidence of the research. To find out the data analysis of students' average score, this research was used quantitative and qualitative data analysis to determine the effect of group work on students' writing skills and students' learning activity.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. Result

The writer discussed the result of writing test and observation sheet from each cycle.

1) The result of observation sheet

The result observation sheet was taken from students' activity and ability in the process of learning activity which had observed by English teacher. It was can shown bellow:

Table 1

The Explanation of Students' Learning Activities in Cycle 1

No	The students' learning activities	Average score	Criteria
1.	Students' activity in answering teacher's questions	6.59	Less Active
2.	Students' activity in asking the question about the material given	6.56	Less Active
3.	Students' activity in doing the assignment which are given by the teacher (Individual)	6.67	Less Active
4.	Students' Activity in Doing the Assignment (Group)	6.76	Less Active
5.	Students' Activity in Finding Learning Resources	6.67	Less Active

Table 2

The Range of Students' Learning Activities in Cycle 1

No	Range of Score	Category
1.	>8.00	Very Active
2.	7.50 - 7.99	Active
3.	7.00 - 7.49	Quite Active
4.	6.00 - 6.99	Less Active

Based on the of the average score in cycle 1 in the criteria of students' learning activities in Group Work technique, the writer find out that the students learning activities was less active.

Table 3
The Explanation of Learning Activities of Cycle 2

No	The students' learning activities	Average score	Criteria
1.	Students' activity in answering teacher's questions	7.39	Quite Active
2.	Students' activity in asking the question about the material given	7.31	Quite Active
3.	Students' activity in doing the assignment which are given by the teacher (Individual)	7.63	Active
4.	Students' Activity in Doing the Assignment (Group)	7.72	Active
5.	Students' Activity in Finding Learning Resources	7.78	Active

Table 4
The Range of Students' Learning Activities in Cycle 2

No	Range of Score	Category
1.	>8.00	Very Active
2.	7.50 - 7.99	Active
3.	7.00 - 7.49	Quite Active
4.	6.00 - 6.99	Less Active

Based on the result of the average score in cycle 2 in the criteria of students' learning activities in Group Work technique, the writer find out that the students learning activities was active. Here the tables of students' learning activities in cycle 1 and cycle 2

Table 5
The Data Comparison of Students' Learning Activities in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2

Mean of Cycle 1	Mean of Cycle 2	Improvement
6.65	7.57	0.92

2) The result of writing test

From the result of the writing test in cycle 1, the mean score for writing test cycle 1 was 60. There was 8 students or 22% who achieved a score above the Minimum Criteria. Meanwhile, there were 28 students or 78% who did not achieve the target score of Minimum Mastery Criteria. So, it was concluded the category of students' scores from writing test in cycle 1 at students eleventh science four SMA Negeri 1 Natar was poor.

Meanwhile, from the result of the writing test in cycle 2 the mean of writing test cycle 2 was 77.57. There were 20 students or 55% who achieved a score above the Minimum Mastery Criteria. Meanwhile, there were 16 students or 45% who did not achieve the target score of Minimum Mastery Criteria. So, it was concluded the category of students' scores from writing test in cycle 1 at student Eleventh Science Four SMA Negeri 1 Natar was high.

Table 6
The Percentage of Students' Writing Test in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2

Action	Students' Learning Result			
	Passed	%	Failed	%
Cycle 1	8	22%	28	55%
Cycle 2	20	78%	16	45%

Based on the writing result and analysis discussed before, it was proven that there was improvement of students learning result in class learning action implemented. Finally, the writer analyzed the mean score from the result writing test in cycle 1 and the result writing test in cycle 2 whether there was an improvement or not.

Table 7
The Data Comparison of Students' Writing Test in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2

Mean of Cycle 1	Mean of Cycle 2	Improvement
60	75.57	15.57

From the calculation, the increased mean score from the result writing test in cycle 1 to the result of the writing test in cycle 2 was 15.57 with the criteria of improvement being fair.

b. Discussion

1. The students' learning activities

The observation conducted by the writer during the action showed that the students were motivated and interested to participate actively in the writing activity. As a result, of the students' learning activities, there was an improvement in students' learning activities. It was shown from the mean score of students' learning activities cycle 1 was 6.65 with the criteria was less active. While the mean score of students' learning activities in cycle 2 was 7.57 with the criteria was active. So, the improvement of students' learning activities in cycle 1 and cycle 2 was 0.92 points.

2. The students' writing ability

Group Work technique can improve students' writing ability at grade Eleventh Science Four students at SMA Negeri 1 Natar. It is based on the students' writing test in Cycle 1 was 60. There was only 8 student or 22% who achieved a score above the Minimum Mastery Criteria. Then, the result of the writing test in cycle 2 was 75.57. There were 20 students or 55% who achieved a score the Minimum Mastery Criteria (KKM). The improvement of the mean score from the writing test' result in cycle 1 and cycle 2 was 15.57. From the result of the data, it could be concluded that the hypothesis in this research could be accepted.

In implemented Group Work technique in teaching learning activities, there were several points that happened during the teaching learning process. The students' respond was getting better in participating to the lesson. The students' were taking part in the teaching learning process by working in a group. In addition, the students were brave to express the ideas and opinion in English especially in written form.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the result and discussion above, the research can concluded that the Group Work technique can improved the students' learning activities and the students' writing skill at the eleventh science four grade of SMA Negeri 1 Natar in the academic year 2022/2023.

1. The students' learning activities

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