

Improving Students' Writing Ability through Small Group Discussion Technique

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to improve students' writing ability by using Small Group Discussion Technique. The subject of this research was the 8th B Grade of SMP Negeri 9 Bandar Lampung. It consisted of 30 students. This research used Classroom Action Research (CAR) method which was consisted of 2 cycles. In this research, the writer used test and non-test in collecting data. The test used in the research was formative and summative test. Meanwhile in non-test, the writer used field note and observation sheet. In analyzing data, this research used quantitative and qualitative data. Based on the result of the research, it found that there was an improvement in students' writing ability after implementing Small Group Discussion. Refers to the result of the test, it showed that a number of students who get the score ≥ 75 is about 17 students with the percentage 56.70% in the first cycle. Meanwhile, it was better in the second cycle. In this cycle, a number of students who get the score ≥ 75 is about 22 students with percentage 73.30%. in the other hand, referring to the students' attitude or behaviour to the lesson. It showed that there were some positive progression that supported them in mastering the lesson. Therefore, it can be concluded that the implementation of Small Group Discussion is successful to improve students' writing ability at the Eighth grade of SMP Negeri 9 Bandar Lampung.

Keywords : *Improving ; Technique; Small Group Discussion; Writing*

INTRODUCTION

Writing is the final product of several separate acts that are hugely challenging to learn simultaneously. Among these separable acts are note-taking, identifying a central idea, outlining, drafting, and editing (Wallace et al., (2004: 15). It is caused by writing is a transferring process that comes from our mind and distributed in written forms. It means that students need to know how to find the ideas of paragraph and express it into writing. According to Richard and Schmidt (in Lestari, 2019: 21) stated that writing is the result of complex processes of planning, drafting, reviewing, and revising and some approaches to the teaching of first and second language writing teach students to use these processes. So that, writing can be explained as a skill to express the idea, opinion and feeling in written forms.

Besides, many reasons writing skill are so difficult to learn. There are many rules that should be considered in writing such as grammar, vocabulary, content, organization, mechanics and so forth. To make a good sentence in writing, the learners must pay attention all of the aspects. Moreover, writing is used for a wide variety of objectives. People can express their idea, experience, knowledge and feeling through writing. Many masterpieces are produced by writing such as book, novel, letter and so on. It is produced in many different forms (Harmer, 2004: 4). It means that writing skill is needed a lot for many people. Because, almost all works which are created in written forms. Moreover, there are already many platforms provided to deliver the idea.

There are some general reasons of why writing is so difficult for students: First, the students need to know the grammatical patterns of English and vocabulary. Second, students should know how to arrange sentences in an organized order. The problem is the students get difficulties to develop their idea. So, the students need the help of teacher in organizing their writing. In addition, referred to the first observation at the school when teaching practice. The English skill of students need to be improved. Moreover, the students were less interested to learn English. One of the reasons was previously people's opinion who said that English is so difficult to learn. Therefore, there were many things that must be fixed to increase the students' interest in English learning. Many aspects must be considered by teachers. They have to be smart in building the atmosphere of learning. According to Heaton (1988: 135) explains that testing the writing skill is complex and sometimes difficult to teach, requiring mastery not only of grammatical and rhetorical devices but also of conceptual and judgemental elements. In addition, there are five skills necessary for writing. they are:

- a. Language use: the ability to write correct and appropriate sentences;
- b. Mechanical skills: the ability to use correctly those conventions peculiar to the written language – e.g. punctuation, spelling;
- c. Treatment of content: the ability to think creatively and develop thoughts, excluding all irrelevant informations;
- d. Stylistic skills: the ability to manipulate sentences and paragraphs, and use language effectively;
- e. Judgements skills: the ability to write in an appropriate manner for a particular purpose with a particular audience in mind, together with an ability to select, organise and order relevant information.

Furthermore, this research is supported by the result of the preliminary research at SMP Negeri 9 Bandar Lampung. There were some problems faced by students especially in writing. First, the learners got difficulty in expressing their ideas. Second, the students had a limited vocabulary. It caused students can not produce writing well. Third, the lack of understanding of grammatical patterns. Furthermore, students lack of motivation in learning English was also become the main problem that caused the English skill was not getting increased.

Considering to the problems above, teacher as a facilitator in teaching and learning process can help to solve the problems. There are a lot of techniques to make

the teaching learning activities more active. Considering the complexity of writing, the teacher should decide a good technique to increase the students' writing skill. In consequence, The writing class must be supported with activities which can improve the students' interest to learn. In this case, the writer will use the small group discussion as the technique in teaching learning process. It is expected can build up the students' motivation to learn. Besides, the English teacher has never used small group discussion in teaching writing.

According to Kenz, M.A. & Greg, J.B (2000:4) stated that small group discussion is one of the cooperative learning techniques in which students work in groups of three or four. A small group is a small member of human, work together through interaction whose interdependent relationship allows them to achieve a mutual goal (see Gee & Handford, 2012; Huang, 2009; Lestari, 2019; Rogers, 1961; Sourander et al., 2010). The goals of cooperative learning are positive interdependence, face-to-face interaction among participant, individual accountability within the group, and interpersonal and small-group skills.

This research is supported by the previous research. it was entitled "The Implementation of Small Group Discussion in Writing Narrative Text at Class X of SMA Negeri 2 Padangsidumpuan in Academic Year of 2019/2020." by Roslina Hasibuan in 2019. Based on the result of the research showed that there was an improvement on students' writing achievement in each cycle. It was supported by the significance result of students score in the pre-test (57), Cycle I (62) and Cycle II (75). It can be concluded that small group discussion can improve students' writing skill. The difference for this research with this previous research is the subject of sample and skill of writing. The sample of the research is very enjoying learning English used small group discussion.

Therefore, the writer wants to know whether implementing small group discussion improve students' writing ability and students' activities in learning writing. Refers to the explanation, the writer would like to do research by the title "Improving Students' Writing Ability through Small Group Discussion Technique at the Eighth Grade of SMP Negeri 9 Bandar Lampung in Academic Year of 2021/2022".

METHOD

In this research, the writer used the Classroom Action Research (CAR) in improving students' writing skill through small group discussion technique (see Bunyamin, 2016; Hinkel, 2011; Irawati, 2008; Jondeya, 2011; Nissa et al., 2021; Ramadhani, 2020; Reidy, 2013; Tanang & Abu, 2014; Widiati & Cahyono, 2006). Classroom Action Research was conducted by a teacher in the class itself through self-reflection, with the purpose of improving performance as a teacher so that the students learning outcomes increased. In other words, Classroom Action Research was a systematic process to solve a problem and make an improvement. According to Kemmis and Taggart (in Putri, 2021: 35), the procedure of classroom action research namely identifying problem and planning, implementing the action, observing and reflecting.

The subjects of the research were the students at the second semester of the eighth class of SMP Negeri 9 Bandar Lampung in academic year of 2021/2022. The total of students in the eighth class are 255 students which consist of 8 classes. The subject of the research was the students of the eighth B class which have 30 students.

The technique of collecting data which used by the researcher is test and non-test. The test used in this research consists of formative and summative test. Formative test is used to measure the students' achievement in each meeting of learning process. Meanwhile, summative test is used to assess the students' learning at the end of each cycle. In non-test section, it consists of field note and observation sheet. Furthermore, there are two types of analyzing data in this research namely quantitative data and qualitative data. Quantitative data was analyzed by using mean statistical formula, while qualitative data was analyzed by using descriptive qualitative method (see Apriyanto & Anum, 2018; Ayu et al., 2020; Herman et al., 2021; MUZIATUN et al., 2020).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the result of the teaching learning process that had been conducted in the first and second cycle, there were some problems identified as long as the teaching learning process. In the first cycle, most of students were less interested to participate in the lesson. They seemed very passive in the first cycle. They preferred listening rather than participating in the class. Besides, the students had hesitation to express their mind. In other words, they were not confident to speak English. They were afraid if making a mistake. Nevertheless, there was an improvement in the second cycle. They were more confident than before. They started giving respond by using English. Although, there was still mistake found whether pronouncation and so on.

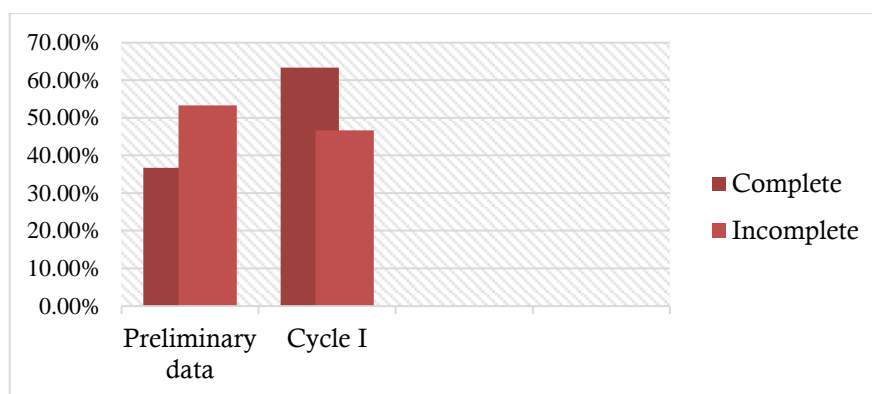
Furthermore, there were some strengths found in the first and second cycle. The students had tried to participate in the class. Although, they were less interested and confused in the beginning. At least, some students pay attention carefully during the researcher conveyed the material. Nevertheless, the researcher tried to get closer with the students. As the result, they looked relaxed in the second cycle. They started enjoyed as long as the activity in the class. They had a much better progression in giving a feedback and answering the question. They seemed a little bit active and enthusiastic when the researcher asked them to guess and answer the question.

In implementing Small Group Discussion in the 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. They were active in taking part in the teaching learning process by working in a group. In addition, they were brave to express something in English.

Table 1. Result of the First Cycle

No	KKM	Preliminary Data	Cycle I		Information
			The Number of Students	% Completeness	
1	≥ 75	11	16	53.33%	Complete
2	≤ 75	19	14	46.67%	Incomplete

Based on the table, it can be seen that the result in the preliminary data was lower than the result of cycle I. In the preliminary data, the student who get the score ≥ 75 is about 11 students with percentage 36.67%. Meanwhile, the student who get the score ≤ 75 is about 19 students with percentage 63.33%. The data is collected before applying small group discussion technique. Nevertheless, after applying the technique, the data gets raising. the student who gets the score ≥ 75 is about 16 students with percentage 53.33 %. Whereas, the student who get the score ≤ 75 is about 14 with percentage 46.67 %. The result of data collected in cycle I is the result after applying small group discussion technique. After doing the test in cycle I, it can be said that there are still some students who do not pass the minimum completeness criteria (KKM).

**Figure 1. The Result of Writing Test in the First Cycle****Table 2. Result of the Second Cycle**

No	KKM	Preliminary Data	Cycle II		Information
			The Number of Students	% Completeness	
1	≥ 75	11	22	73.33%	Complete
2	≤ 75	19	8	26.67%	Incomplete

Based on the result above, it shows that there is an improvement in the second cycle. the student who gets the score ≥ 75 is about 22 students with percentage 73.33%. Meanwhile, the student who gets the score ≤ 75 is about 8 students with percentage 26.67%. So, the use of Small Group Discussion in the second cycle is better than in the first cycle. As a result, this technique can be said that it can improve the students' writing ability and the learning activities.

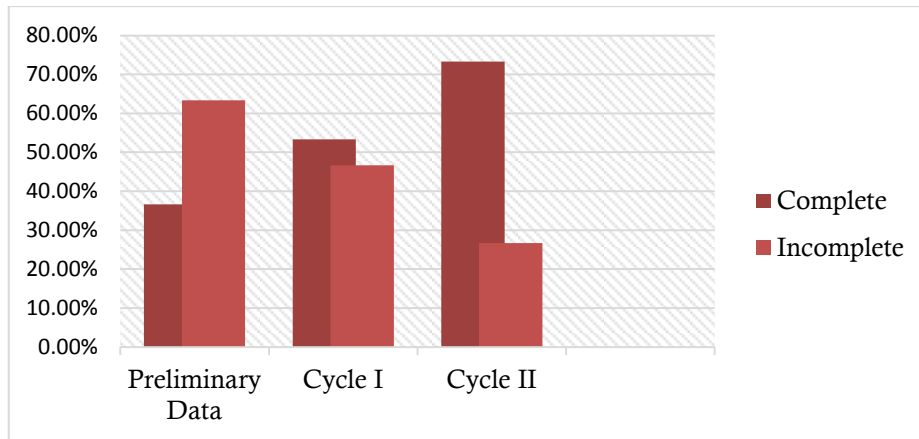


Figure 2. The Result of Writing Test in the Second Cycle

Furthermore, based on the result of observation and the score of the test, it can be concluded that small group discussion technique can improve students' writing ability in the English subject of VIII B SMP Negeri 9 Bandar Lampung in academic year of 2021/2022. Small Group Discussion has been implemented in the class during the research. This technique can give positive change to the teaching learning activities. However, there are still some things that must be fixed. As a teacher, it can create the atmosphere of class more fun in order to take students' intention. Besides, using any media in order to make the students active, innovative and creative.

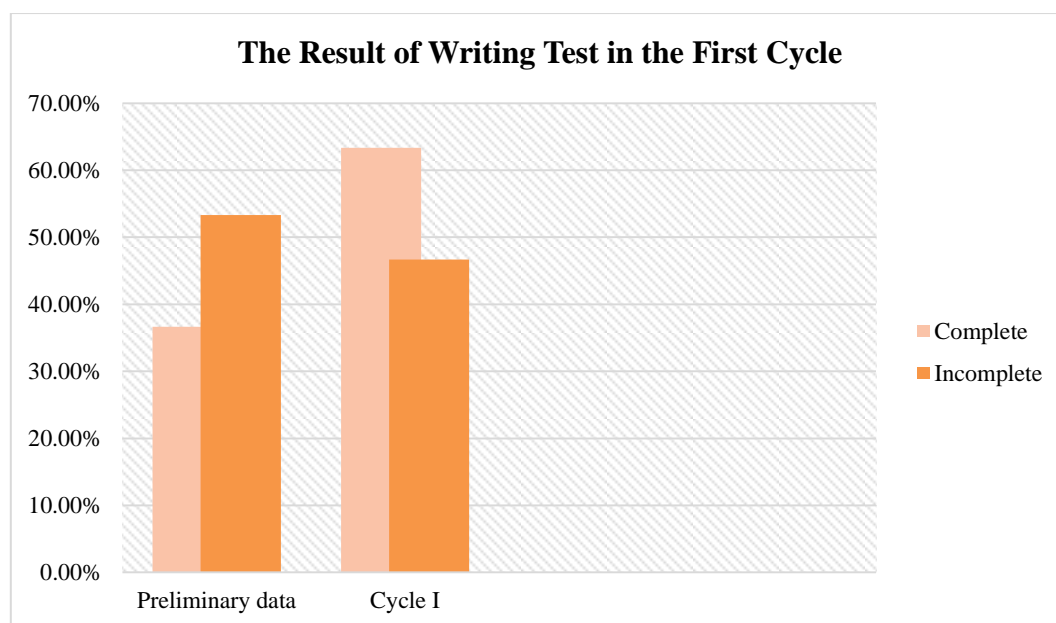
Discussion

Classroom Action Research was a systematic process to solve a problem and make an improvement. In addition, Classroom Action Research (CAR) which focuses on a particular group of students in the certain classroom. In this research, it consisted of 2 cycles. Each cycle consisted of three meetings. There were four steps in each cycle, they are : planning, acting, observing and reflecting. According to Kemmis and Taggart (in Putri, 2021: 35), the procedure of classroom action research can be explained as follows, Identifying problem and planning, Implementing the action, Observing, Reflecting.

The result in the preliminary data was lower than the result of cycle I. In the preliminary data, the student who get the score ≥ 75 is about 11 students with percentage 36.67%. Meanwhile, the student who get the score ≤ 75 is about 19 students with percentage 63.33%. The data is collected before applying small group discussion technique. Nevertheless, after applying the technique, the data gets raising. the student who gets the score ≥ 75 is about 16 students with percentage 53.33 %. Whereas, the student who get the score ≤ 75 is about 14 with percentage 46.67 %. The result of data collected in cycle I is the result after applying small group discussion technique. After doing the test in cycle I, it can be said that there are still some students who do not pass the minimum completeness criteria (KKM). It can be seen on chart below.

Table 3. The Result of Cycle I

No	KKM	Preliminary data	Cycle I		Information
			The number of students	% Completeness	
1	≥ 75	11	16	53,33%	Complete
2	≤ 75	19	14	46,67%	Incomplete

**Figure 3. The Result of Writing Test in the First Cycle**

Based on the result on cycle II, it shown that there is an improvement in the second cycle. the student who gets the score ≥ 75 is about 22 students with percentage 73.33%. Meanwhile, the student who gets the score ≤ 75 is about 8 students with percentage 26.67%. So, the use of Small Group Discussion in the second cycle is better than in the first cycle. As a result, this technique can be said that it can improve the students' writing ability and the learning activities. It can be seen on chart below.

Table 4. The Result of Cycle II

No	KKM	Preliminary data	Cycle II		Information
			The number of students	% Completeness	
1	≥ 75	11	22	73,33%	Complete
2	≤ 75	19	8	26,67%	Incomplete

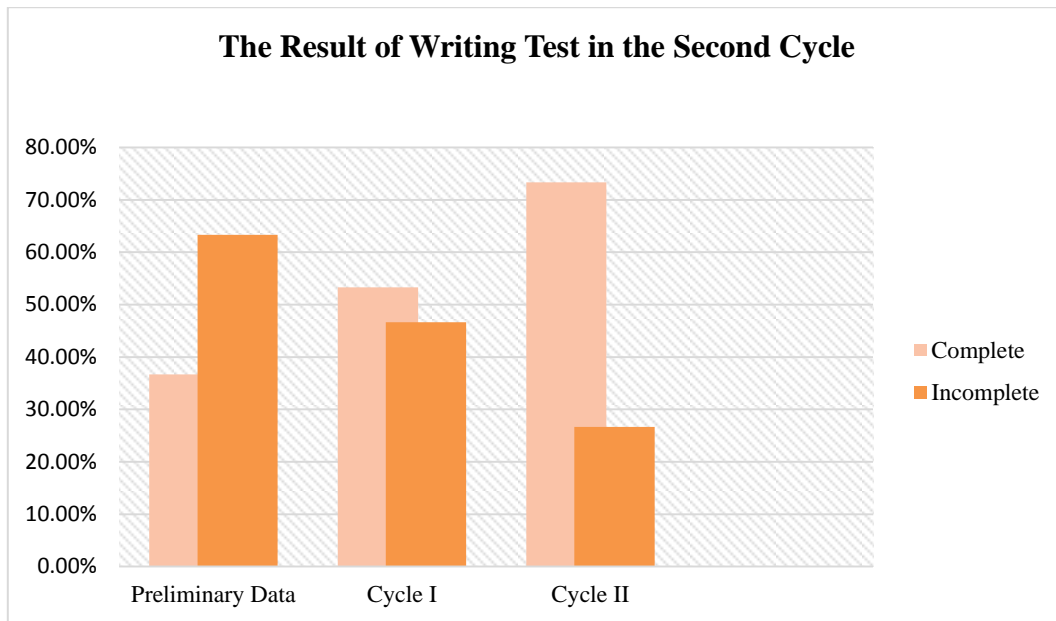


Figure 4. The Result of Writing Test in the Second Cycle

Based on the result of observation and the score of the test, it can be concluded that small group discussion technique can improve students' writing ability in the English subject of VIII B SMP Negeri 9 Bandar Lampung in academic year of 2021/2022. Small Group Discussion has been implemented in the class during the research. This technique can give positive change to the teaching learning activities. However, there are still some things that must be fixed. As a teacher, it can create the atmosphere of class more fun in order to take students' intention. Besides, using any media in order to make the students active, innovative and creative.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the research, it can be concluded that students' writing ability in the Eight Grade of SMP Negeri 9 Bandar Lampung improves after implementing Small Group Discussion technique. It can be seen from the score of the test. it showed that there was a significant improvement. The result of the score in the first cycle showed that a number of students who got the score ≥ 75 was about 17 students with the percentage 56.70% . meanwhile, it was better in the second cycle. In this cycle, a number of students who got the score ≥ 75 was about 22 students with percentage 73.30%. in the other hand, referring to the students' attitude or behaviour to the lesson. It showed that there were some positive progression that supported them in mastering the lesson.

Moreover, the atmosphere of class was more fun during implementing small group discussion technique. The student was more enjoyed and comfortable during the teaching learning process. They were more active and interested to take a part in the lesson. They were more confidence in sharing their ideas.

Refers to the explanation above, it can be said that the use of small group discussion technique can improve the students' writing ability in the Eighth grade of SMP Negeri 9 Bandar Lampung.

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