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## IMPROVING SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION AND ACHIEVEMENT IN WRITING SKILL BY USING CONTEXTUAL TEACHING AND LEARNING (CTL)

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### Abstract

*This study aims at enhancing the students' participation and achievement in the process of teaching and learning writing skill through the application of contextual teaching and learning (CTL) approach with its seven components. The method used in this study was the cyclic model of Kemmis and McTaggart classroom action research, in which the quantitative data collected were analysed by using descriptive statistics, while the qualitative data were described in words. The research findings show that the use of CTL could increase the students' learning participation and improve their performance in writing skill. The students were highly motivated and contented with the process of teaching and learning writing skill. In addition, the result of this study also shows that all expected success indicators designed (>75) could be reached over in the second cycle. First, the number of students actively participating in the teaching and learning writing process increased from 62.5% to 82.1% (cycle 1 through cycle 2). Second, the number of students who felt pleasure in the process of teaching and learning rose from 84.7 (cycle 1) to 93.9 (cycle 2). Third, the number of students whose quality of paragraph could reach the criteria of learning mastery also increased from 42.8% to 85.7%. Forth, the number of students who can do all the tasks assigned by the teacher during the teaching and learning process went up from 71.4% to 89.2%. The experts' opinions and the research findings reveal that CTL is effective to improve the students' learning participation and achievement in writing skill.*

**Keywords:** *Students' participation, achievement, writing skill, Contextual Teaching Learning (CTL).*

### INTRODUCTION

One of the purposes of learning English for senior high school students in Indonesia, based on education ministry policy (Permendikbud) no 59 year 2014 about the 2013 curriculum, is to develop students' communicative competence in spoken and written language of interpersonal, transactional and functional texts. This means that the students are expected to be able to master all of the four English skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, writing has been considered as a difficult skill to learn in senior high school. This is in line with Richard (2002) who claims writing to be the most difficult skill to learn since it involves more than putting the ideas into the written form, but arranging and interpreting the ideas into comprehensible texts.

Additionally, the author's observation and teaching experience in one of senior high schools in Indonesia, SMAN 3 Banda Aceh, also revealed that there were some problems found in the process of teaching and learning writing skill. First, the students considered writing as a boring skill to be learned. As a result, the students were drowsy and not motivated to actively participate in learning

writing. Second, most students did not pay attention to the teacher's explanation and they preferred to make a noise. As a consequence, most students were not able to achieve the school given criteria of assessment (KKM >70). For example in class X-4, there were only 11 students out of 28 students who can reach the criteria of minimal learning mastery (<50%). It is assumed that such low achievement is due to the teacher's application of inappropriate approach to teach writing, and the irrelevant materials in the textbook, which often do not relate to the students' real world.

To solve the problem, therefore, teacher needs to use the proper teaching approach in which the material used should be related to the students' real life. One of the possible solutions is the application of CTL (Contextual Teaching and Learning) approach in teaching writing. Johnson (2002, p. 25) as well as Hudson and Whisler (2007, p. 54) define CTL as a teaching approach in which teachers present real situation in class and relate the new knowledge to the existing context and condition to enable students see meanings in the learning process. The implementation of this approach could also encourage the students' motivation in the teaching and learning process since this approach emphasizes on the students' interests and real life experience, as commented by Satriani, Emilia, and Gunawan (2012, p. 11). Thus, the improvement would not only be obvious on the students' achievement but also on their learning participation.

Furthermore, there were also some research findings on the use of CTL in teaching writing. For example, Yuniarsih (2008) in her research revealed that CTL could improve the students' performance in writing skill, make the class situation more alive, and motivate the students to participate actively in class. Upon reading such research findings and the statements of theorists, the author (teacher) intends to find out whether the application of CTL approach with the seven components (constructivism, inquiry, questioning, learning community, modeling, reflection, and authentic assessment), as suggested by Nurhadi, Yasin, and Senduk (2004, p. 31) and Wijarwadi, 2008, p. 27) in the process of teaching and learning writing could improve the senior high school students' writing achievement and their learning participation.

## **METHODS**

The method used in this research was the cyclic model of action research forwarded by Kemmis and McTaggart (as cited in Hopkins, 1985) that includes planning, action, observation/evaluation, and reflection in each cycle. The success indicators were also designed both in terms of students' learning participation and students' learning achievement (>75%) to find out the successfulness of this classroom action research project in each cycle. This research was conducted in two cycles in which each cycle took 5x40 minutes. The subject of this research was the students at class X-4 of SMAN 3 Banda Aceh. This class was selected because it was considered as low quality class in terms of achievement and motivation, particularly in the writing lesson.

The instruments used in this research include observation sheet, teacher's note, writing test, and questionnaire. The collected qualitative data (the result from observation sheet and teacher's note) was analysed with the process of reducing unimportant data, classifying the data, verifying the data, and drawing conclusion in elaboration of words (Creswell, 2014, p. 237). Additionally, the gathered quantitative data (the writing test) was analysed by using holistic scoring rubric (the focus of the assessment is on the number of sentences produced, the correct use of direct and/ or indirect speech, the correct use of capitalization and punctuation, and the overall comprehensible content of the news item writing) to find out the individual score (Shohamy, 1985, p. 196), and the mean was then calculated to find the average of students' score in the class. Meanwhile, the questionnaire result was analysed in percentage to be further described in words.

Finally, it is important to note that in conducting this research, the author was observed by a colleague (teacher-aid), who acted as observer and collaborator respectively. The author was also helped by the counsellor (classroom teacher) to discuss the preparation and the findings.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In the first cycle, the whole quantity of students participating at class reached averagely 62.5% (Based on the teacher's note and the observer's note), while the feeling of pleasure in learning reached 84.7% for teaching and learning condition (the result of questionnaire of seven indicators shown in Table 1)

**Table 1.** Students' response on the teaching and learning condition (first cycle).

	Material presented	Written material provided	The classroom's atmosphere while learning	Today's way of learning	Teacher's performance	Exercise/ activities given	Teacher's way of teaching	% Average
Pleased	85.8%	92.9%	82.2%	71.4%	75%	92.9%	92.9%	84.7%
Unpleased	7.1%	0%	10.7%	25%	0%	7.1%	7.1%	8.2%
No Comment	7.1%	7.1%	7.1%	3.6%	25%	0%	0%	7.1%

This showed that most students were pleased to be involved in the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Furthermore, in terms of the students' writing achievement, it was found that 6 students showed indications of plagiarism and scored only 20. Some other students wrote their own sentences but less than minimum number of required sentences, so they scored below KKM. Only 12 students out of 28 students could pass KKM, which is 70. The average class score is only 57 and the percentage of students who can reach KKM is only 42.8 %. This shows that below 75% of students can achieve the criteria of minimum learning mastery. Besides, about 71.4% students (20 students) were able to do all assignments assigned by the teacher. Overall, In terms of the students' participation and achievement, it can be said that the first cycle was not so successful that the second cycle was needed.

In the second cycle, the follow up actions the teacher planned were well applied. It seemed that the change the teacher made result in better participation and achievement in the students' writing skill. The evaluation used was the same as the first cycle. In this cycle, about 82.1 % students (23 students) actively participated in all activities assigned by the teacher in class. The situation of teaching and learning created by the teacher made the students feel more enjoyable. About 93, 9 % of the students felt pleasure in learning at class as shown in the following table.

**Table 2.** Students' response on the teaching and learning condition (second cycle).

	Material presented	Written material provided	The classroom's atmosphere while learning	Today's way of learning	Teacher's performance	Exercise/ activities given	Teacher's way of teaching	% Average
Pleased	96.4%	100%	92.8%	89.3%	82.1%	96.4%	100%	93.9%
Unpleased	0%	0%	3.6%	7.1%	0%	3.6%	0%	2.0%
No Comment	3.6%	0%	3.6%	3.6%	17.9%	0%	0%	4.1%

In terms of the students' achievement, the average of students' writing scores in the second cycle increased from 57 to 76. In addition, the number of students who can reach KKM was 24 students; only four students failed to get 70 in their writing test. Therefore, the percentage for those who were successful in reaching the criteria of minimum learning mastery is 85.7%. Most of the students made some improvements, but some of them had the same score with cycle 1. About 89.2% of students (25 students) are also able to understand and do all process activities designed by the teacher.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, CTL could successfully enhance the senior high school students' learning participation and achievement in the process of teaching and learning writing skill. In term of the students' participation, all expected success indicators designed could be reached in the second cycle. First, there is a significant increase from cycle 1 to cycle 2, which is 62.5% to 82.1% in terms of the number of students who participated actively in the teaching and learning writing skill. The value of 82.1 indicates that the success indicator designed for students' participation was achieved and even more than targeted (>75%). Next, the number of students who feel pleasure also has 9.2 point increases from cycle 1 (84.7). The value of cycle 2 (93.9) was also over the expected target (>75). The value in cycle 1 even has, in fact, been greater than the target, but because some other expected indicators have not been achieved in cycle 1, the researcher must conduct another cycle.

Moreover, in term of achievement, the number of students whose quality of paragraph can reach the criteria of learning mastery also increases significantly, that is, from 42.8% to 85.7%. Their average class score goes up from 57 to 76. These data show that cycle 2 was not only greater than the expected target (>75%) but also can reach over the class criteria of learning mastery decided by school, that is, 70. In addition, the percentage of students who can do all tasks assigned by the teacher during the teaching and learning process can reach 89.2% in cycle 2. 17, 8 points increase from cycle 1 (71.4%). The value of 89.2% also indicates that the percentage reaches over the

expected success indicator designed (>75). However, further study is needed to ensure the generalizability of the result, that is, by replicating this study into different school levels in different provinces.

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